

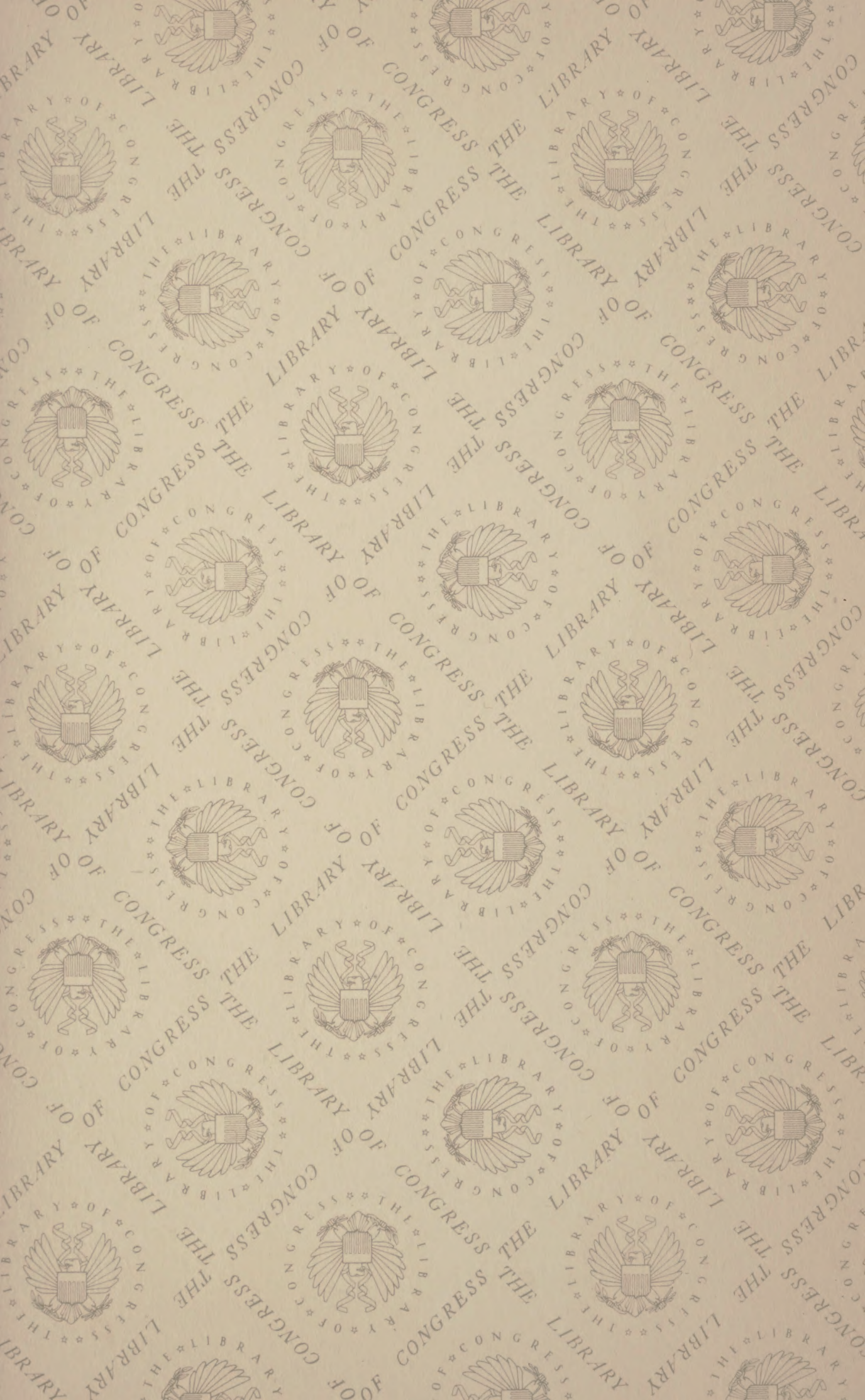
PZ

3

.G8273B

FT MEADE
GenColl



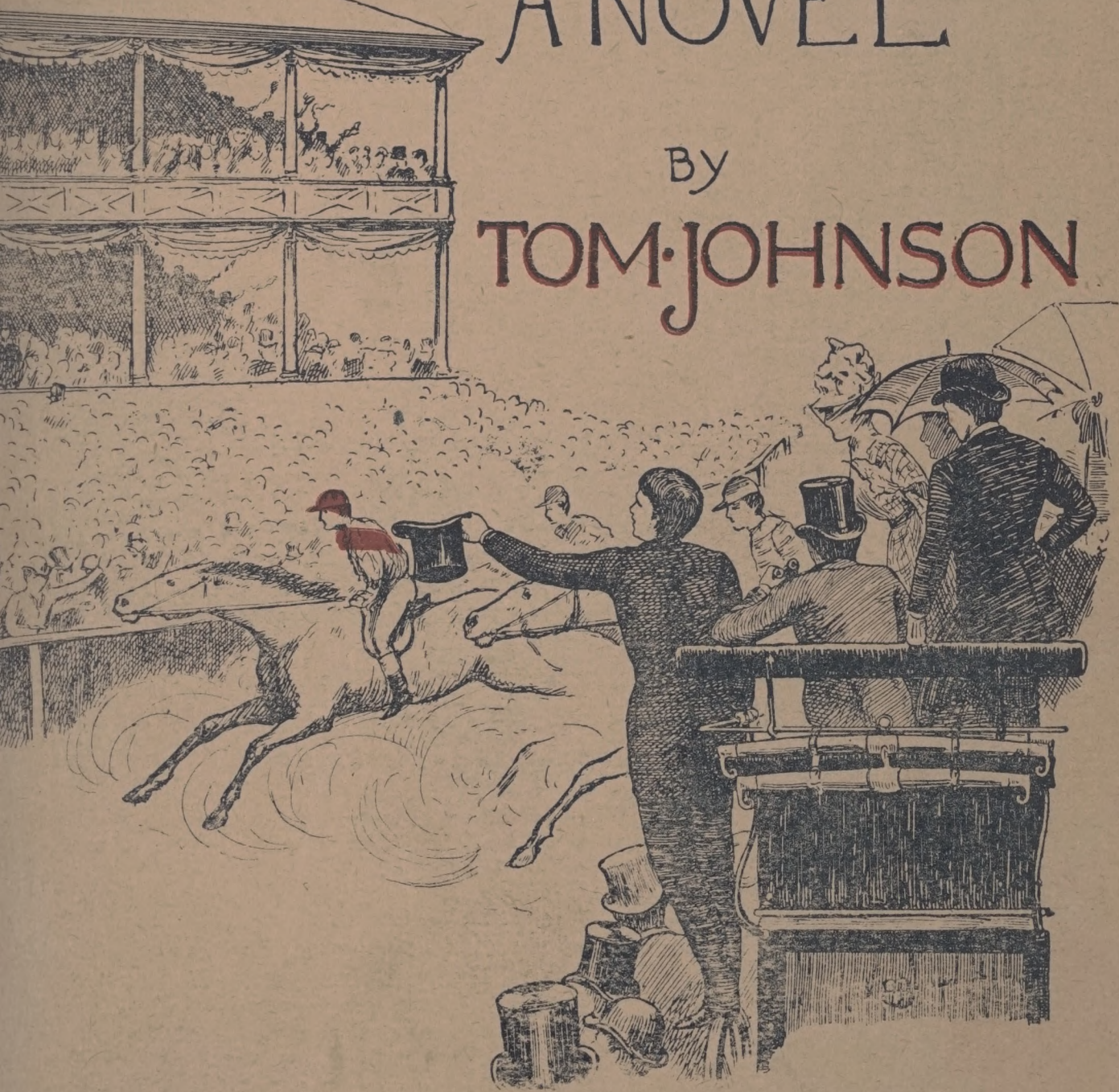


2, C.

A BLUEGRASS THOROUGHBRED

A NOVEL

By
TOM JOHNSON



BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers, Chicago, New York and San Francisco.

LONDON: H. J. DRANE, Lovell's Court, Paternoster Row.

The Household Library. No. 14, Vol. 4. Nov. 19, 1888. Annual Subscription \$30.00. Issued semi-weekly. Entered at the Post Office at Chicago as second class matter.

NEW BOOKS.

THE POLITICS OF LABOR.

By PHILLIPS THOMPSON. 1 vol., 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

"This book will mark an epoch in American thought. It is fully up with the times.
* * * It is the prophet of the New Era."—*The People, R. I.*

"One of the most valuable works drawn out by current discussions on social and economical questions, and one that is sure to take a high place in the permanent and standard literature of the times."—*Opinion, Rockland.*

"This book is enlightening and inspiring; every thoughtful man and woman should read it."—*Tribune, Junction City.*

"Mr. Thompson presents the whole question of land and labor reform as clearly as could be desired."—*Mail, Chicago.*

BANCROFT'S HISTORY OF THE COLONIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES.

By GEORGE BANCROFT. Two vols in one. 12mo. Illustrated. Cloth, \$1.50.

"Since Ranke's death George Bancroft is the greatest living historian. The American citizen who has not read his history of the United States is a poor patriot, or an unfortunately ignorant person. We fear there are too many of them, as there are of those who have never even read the constitution of their country. It is not too late for these delinquents to buy a copy of this great book, and learn something that will be of interest and profit the remainder of their lives."—*The Churchman*

THE STORY OF MANON LESCAUT.

From the French of L'Abbe Prévost. A new translation, by ARTHUR W. GUNDRY, from the French edition of 1753, with over 200 full-page and other illustrations by the great French artist, Maurice Leloir, and others. Reproduced by photogravure, wood-engraving, and photo-engraving processes from the superb edition de luxe, published in Paris in 1885. 4to. Cloth, extra gold and red, in a neat box, \$3.00. [N. B.—The price of the French edition, with same engravings, is \$20.]

PAINTERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE.

By EDITH HEALY. Illustrated by 25 original copperplate engravings of choice masterpieces of the leading Italian painters, executed in the highest style of art by the famous French engraver, M. De Mare. Small 4to. Richly bound, extra cloth, gold title and ornamentation, \$5.00. Full morocco, \$4.00. Cloth, school edition, \$1.25.

WASHINGTON IRVING'S LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON.

3 vols., 12mo., cloth, \$4.50; 3 vols., 12mo., half morocco, \$9.00; 3 vols., 12mo., half calf, \$9.00.

To speak at this late day in praise of Irving's "Life of Washington" would be like painting marble or gilding refined gold. No American library, public or private, is complete without this work. This is a new edition, printed from new plates, at a very moderate price.

LES MISERABLES.

By VICTOR HUGO. 1 vol., large 12mo., \$1 50; the same on heavy paper in 3 vols., 12mo., cloth, \$4.50; 3 vols., 12mo., half morocco, \$9.00; 3 vols., 12mo., half calf, \$9.00. Illustrated.

"Les Misérables" is universally admitted to be the great masterpiece of Victor Hugo, that brightest literary light of modern France. This book, once carefully read, will never be forgotten. The study of it is an education.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers,
CHICAGO, NEW YORK, AND SAN FRANCISCO.

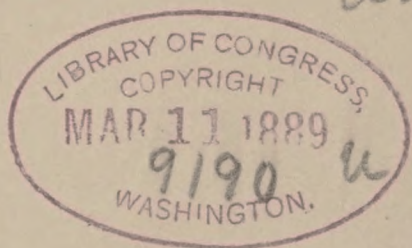
A BLUE-GRASS THOROUGHBRED.

A BLUE-GRASS THOROUGHbred

A Novel

By TOM JOHNSON

(present)
Warren Green



BELFORD, CLARKE & CO.,
CHICAGO, NEW YORK, AND SAN FRANCISCO
PUBLISHERS

LONDON, HENRY J. DRANE, Lovell's Court, Paternoster Row

PZ3
C 8213 B

COPYRIGHT, 1889.
BELFORD, CLARKE & COMPANY.

A BLUE-GRASS THOROUGHBRED.

CHAPTER I.

“ I SAY, Wick, don't you want to join us ? ”

“ No, thank you. Have another engagement.”

“ Yes, and if things continue in the red-hot fashion of the last few days, you will have still *another* engagement,” laughed the first speaker. “ You always are busy lately, no cards, no rides ; why, I verily believe that if I wanted to match my chesnut against your bay for a century, owners to ride, you would plead ‘ another engagement ’ and steal off to Lovers Leap with a certain banjo, to practice whistling duets ; the owner of said banjo being of course a minor consideration.

“ A little show of the needful might get an answer slightly differing from that,” said the person addressed as Wick, his steel gray eyes lighting up a little under the friendly chaff.

“ I reckon,” laconically answered the first, betraying his Southern origin by that one phrase, “ I don't care to match my roadster against the best steeple-

chase horse and rider in Kentucky. Not for a very *large* amount."

"Well, don't chaff! you know that to propose a horse-race to me is like shaking a red rag at an angry bull. Besides, everybody is waiting for you, so go on."

"And you want the room all to yourself, so you can moon around and make sonnets to your 'mistress's eyebrow,' eh? Well, of all the spooney men——" The sentence was never finished owing to the sudden exit of the speaker, followed by a varied assortment of riding-boots, boot-jacks and tennis rackets, which the nervous arm of the Kentucky athlete had sent in rapid succession, and under which bombardment the enemy had been compelled to retreat.

Left alone, Wickliff Breckenridge, if he did not exactly make sonnets, did proceed to light with great deliberation, a huge meerschaum pipe and stretch himself at full length upon one of the two narrow beds that went very far toward constituting the furniture of the room. He was built on a generous scale and the narrow high-backed chairs afforded little comfort for his large frame. Born and reared in the "Blue Grass" regions of Kentucky, the lime-stone water and southdown mutton had materially assisted in developing his frame, until he was a specimen of physical manhood worth looking at. A trifle over six feet in height, his constant out-door life had hardened his muscles, embrowned his skin and kept down his inherited tendency to flesh, until he was in a condition to walk all day across thickets for birds, back a good "weight carrier" for a deer hunt through the

mountains, or win the hearts of half the girls at the springs, as opportunity offered.

It was the latter feat that he was now contemplating; that is, not exactly winning the hearts of half the girls, but of one whose heart was to him more worthy of being won than all the other feminine auricles at White Sulphur put together.

He had stopped over at the latter place more to see his friend Ransom Randolph,—or “Ranse,” as everybody called him—than with any idea of enjoying the Springs. But he had found mettle sufficiently attractive to keep him longer; and now, after two weeks, he was beginning to ask himself some serious questions.

He had had many affairs in his life, for he was then at that point which is variously described as “the old age of youth” and “the youth of old age,” but in his case was most appropriately his prime. He was in his fortieth year, but his brown hair and his full long mustache were untinged with any suspicion of white. Life in the open air had put a bronze on his cheek, but there were no wrinkles upon his broad white forehead or about his eyes, and above all, his heart was as young as the veriest boy's. His laugh was still the merriest and rang out with as unconstrained a sound as at twenty. But now, for the first time, he was seriously considering whether he was not fatally wounded by Cupid's arrow and most unusual thoughts were crowding in on his perturbed brain. Was he too old? He had never thought of that before. Did she like, might she be persuaded to love him? Could he win her, and if so, could she be induced

to come to his Kentucky home and brighten his lonely bachelorhood? It never occurred to him before, but it was a most infernally lonesome life he was leading.

His pipe had gone out; his massive jaw had dropped slightly, and the wide-awake blue eyes had a dreamy stare very foreign to them, when suddenly a bright flash passed over his face and his whole expression and attitude indicated, if not a solution, at least, a definite purpose.

"I'll go ask her," he said simply.

Having solved the problem to that point with the simplicity and directness of purpose that was his chief characteristic, he arose, readjusted his toilet, substituted a cigar for his neglected pipe, and swung his athletic figure out of "Paradise Row" and across the lawn to the main building, determined to lose no time in putting the momentous question.

Seated at the piano in the large parlor of the hotel, was an aristocratic-looking and still beautiful woman of some thirty-five years of age, whose slender figure had reached the perfection of her womanhood. Standing near her and pouring forth a volume of melody in a rich deep contralto, was a younger and even more beautiful woman, about twenty-two years of age, with a graceful, well-developed figure, fair, blonde face, large thoughtful blue eyes, broad, noble forehead and perfectly shaped head, set on her full sloping shoulders with a regal poise.

She ceased singing as the Kentuckian entered.

"Ah, Captain Breckenridge," exclaimed Mrs. Dulaney, the elder of the two women. "I know you will be delighted at some news I have for you. Natalie

has just promised to visit me in Louisville and stay until after the Fall races."

"Good news, indeed! I am perfectly delighted. When does she come?"

"Just as soon as she finishes her visit here. When do you go East?"

"I must leave to-night. I have some business that will not admit of delay."

"To-night!" the words burst involuntarily from the lips of Natalie Pegram, her face paling perceptibly and her whole attitude showing an interest of which she was evidently unconscious.

"Yes. I have already overstayed my time and can wait no longer."

"We shall see you in Louisville?" asked Mrs. Dulany.

"Oh, yes. I never miss a Race-meeting."

Tacitly, unconsciously, Natalie gathered her parasol and hat, and stood expectant. A few words more with Mrs. Dulany, and Natalie and Breckenridge strolled towards "Lover's Leap." In silence the distance was traversed, in silence a secluded nook was selected in which they ensconced themselves comfortably.

"Where do you go?" she asked at last.

"New York first, then Long Branch, Saratoga, et cetera."

"I cannot see how you can have such pressing business at such places," she said somewhat petulantly.

"My horses run there."

"Your horses?"

"Yes. I have a stable of thoroughbreds which are entered for the fixed events. Beside I expect to en-

ter for some of the minor races, if I think it advisable."

"And are you a horse-man?" she asked, in great surprise.

"If by 'horse-man' you mean one who runs horses, yes."

"But I had such a different idea. I thought—I have heard—that is"—she stopped, very much confused; which confusion was increased by the wide-eyed wonder in his face.

"The truth is, Captain Breckenridge, my father is a *very* straight-laced puritan in his views. I don't believe he ever went to a horse-race in his life. I certainly never did. I confess my idea of horse-men to be vague and indistinct, but I did not think of them as people one"—she hesitated and seeing his complete ignorance of her reasoning, finished desperately "one would meet in society. I beg your pardon! I did not think how it would sound," incoherently.

But to her intense amazement, he threw back his head and gave free vent to the ringing, musical laugh for which he was famous.

"Excuse me," he said at last, seeing her flushed face, "but that struck me as being so funny. Why, Miss Natalie, my father and grandfather kept and ran these horses ever since blue grass has been known in Kentucky. My Virginian ancestors before them kept *their* racers and beyond that my cavalier ancestors, in "Merrie England," were addicted to the same habit until the Roundheads drove them out of England to the colonies. Indeed we have several traditions in our family which go to show that, but

for the speed and endurance of those same horses, a period would have been put to their existence and the family line at one and the same time. You see I am far from being ashamed of doing that for which I have so illustrious a precedent, that which I have been brought up to, and that which I regard as my natural avocation."

"I am sure I beg your pardon; I really spoke from ignorance."

"And I beg yours for my untimely mirth, for I am not in a mirthful mood to-day."

A long silence fell between them. Natalie had not spent three seasons in society without learning to tell with an unerring instinct, which amounts to a sixth sense, almost, in women, when a man had determined on the eventful step.

She knew perfectly well that the captain meant to propose there and then, and there was something about the man that daunted her. She simply dared not trifle with him, for she knew that beneath his laughing, sunny *bonhomie* there lurked a nature full of such strength of passion, such depth of feeling, such force of character that she feared to rouse it.

His eyes, which were fixed on her face, glowed with a phosphorescent light. His face slowly paled, as his emotion began to master him. He drew closer, almost touched her; she half turned, her arm came in contact with him and sent a galvanic shock through both. They neither of them ever knew just how it happened, but in a second she was clasped in his arms, his burning eyes almost frightened her with the in-

tensity of their gaze, and his powerful figure trembling like an aspen with concentrated feeling.

Overpowered, bewildered, mastered, she lay supinely in his arms, and when the white, set face drew nearer to hers, she offered neither resistance nor protest, but allowed him to cull the sweetness from her rich, full lips, in a dreamy haze of emotion which she could not analyze and did not understand. But she felt that she had never known what happiness was until that moment.

A long blissful silence followed, too profound, too holy for words.

At last his naturally deep voice, made deeper with tenderness, murmured a few terms of passionate endearment and she gently released herself. Seated on the rustic bench, to be forever after sacred to their eyes, she nestled contentedly in his arms. There their troth was plighted, there they exchanged vows of never-dying constancy and devotion, and there they formed their plans for the future, chief among which was his design to visit her father in New York and make a formal demand for her hand.

CHAPTER II.

NATHANIEL PEGRAM was seated in the roomy office of his large business house, deeply immersed in a pile of letters which would have daunted many a man, but which he attacked with the pertinacity which was his distinctive characteristic.

He was a short, heavy-set man, with a shock of iron-gray hair that stood out in every direction, like iron filings on a magnet. His broad shoulders and stocky-built frame seemed capable of defying alike the ravages of time and the wear and tear of work. His face was but a supplement of his figure. His square jaws showed his indomitable will. His pent-house forehead and shaggy brows gave indication of uncontrolled temper, and the rather deficient cranial development evinced lack of ideality.

The fact is, he was a man who owed his success in life, and he had been wonderfully successful, to his force of character rather than his intellectuality. His bull-dog pertinacity kept him hammering away, early and late, at whatever object he had in view, until sheer persistence often won for him what others failed to acquire by subtler means. All his life he had mastered opposition, until now, well up in the sixties, he had acquired the utmost impatience at the smallest interference. His youth, spent in his New

England home, under the domination of his hard, puritanical father, had implanted the most rigorous old-timed fanaticisms in a mind never capable of seeing but one side of a question, and as immovable as it was narrow and short-sighted.

"A gentleman wishes to see you, sir," said a fair-haired athletic young man of about twenty-three or four years of age.

"What's his business?"

"He says his business is personal."

"Some fellow with gold mine or a new patent or something for me to invest in. Ask him the nature of his business."

"I did, sir, and he says its strictly personal."

"Well, I suppose the quickest way is to see him and get rid of him. Show him in."

The Kentuckian was ushered in and stood calmly waiting for Nathaniel Pegram to give him his attention.

"Good morning, Mr.—" consulting the card in his hand, "Breckenridge. You wished to see me on some personal matter, I understand."

"Yes," he hesitated; "the fact is, Mr. Pegram, I am just from White Sulphur Springs, where I had the pleasure of meeting your daughter."

"Ah!" The exclamation was dry and non-indicative.

"Yes,"—a pause. "Mr. Pegram, I am a Kentucky farmer and horse-man. I have one hundred acres of blue grass farm and some fifty thousand dollars worth of horses. I can't offer your daughter the life of luxury that others might, perhaps, but I

can protect her from hardship. I can refer you to many well-known citizens of your place, who will satisfy you as to my character and standing. I love your daughter, and after obtaining her permission, I am here for the purpose of formally asking your consent to our union."

The words came so rapidly and with such directness and force that Nathaniel Pegram was for a moment bewildered.

"Some fifty thousand dollars worth of horses?"

"About that, on a fair estimate."

"Do I understand that these are race-horses, and that your income is derived from them?"

"Yes, sir ; that is my business."

"And you have come to ask my daughter's—*my* daughter's hand?"

"Yes," the steel blue eyes were beginning to lighten a little.

"Then you shall have my answer now and forever. No!" he thundered. "No! do you hear? You, a gambling, horse-racing, whisky-drinking rebel, most probably, to dare to come to me and ask my daughter's hand in order that you may squander her money in your riotous debauchery! No!"—lashing himself into a fury as he went on. "No, a thousand times no! You have your answer. Now leave my office."

"I am not ready to go until I have had my say," was the reply. His tone was very quiet, but his eyes gleamed ominously.

"What can *you* have to say? Nothing that will change my mind, you may be sure. I never retract or change. Everybody knows that."

"I have not the slightest desire to change your mind. With a degree of frankness that does equal credit to your head and heart, you have expressed your views. I feel it incumbent on me to ventilate mine. I have paid you the courtesy due you as Natalie's father. I have asked your consent, which you have refused. I tell you now, frankly, I mean to marry her without, if she will consent. Oh! I don't mean to elope or do anything underhanded. I will come for her, claim her, yes, and take her away with me in the broad open light of the day, with or without your consent."

"You—you infernally impudent horse-jockey! Here Frank," he cried, ringing the bell furiously; "Frank, put that fellow out of this office!"

The handsome clerk, who had announced the Kentuckian, flushed slightly.

"You forget yourself, Mr. Pegram," he said, with calm dignity. "I am individual book-keeper for your firm and not your hired 'bouncer.'"

"Afraid, eh? Daunted by his broad shoulders."

"I am neither afraid of his broad shoulders nor your tongue. I don't propose to allow myself to be taunted into taking up your quarrels. You are an older man than he, and should he offer violence I would protect you on that account, but if you want any such work done, you can do it yourself. I am no man's bully."

"Spoken like a man," said the captain; "I have no idea of using any violence unless attacked, and just so soon as I am satisfied that no attempt will be made to eject me, I shall take my leave."

"Frank Manly, you are discharged from this moment," cried the now maddened man, who, accustomed to undisputed sway in every trifle, found himself bearded and baffled in the most unexpected and aggravating way. "Present your account to the cashier, but never cross that door again."

The young man bowed without speaking.

"Come and see me to-night. I may have something to say that will interest you," said the captain, handing him his card.

And then turning easily and calmly on his heel, he strode out of the room, without a glance at the enraged merchant.

Captain Breckenridge and Frank Manly were seated in the former's comfortable room at one of New York's handsomest hotels, the captain pulling away at his beloved pipe, the other keeping company with a cigarette.

"Tell me something about yourself," said the captain, breaking the pause. I call myself a pretty good judge of character, and I have taken a fancy to you."

"Well, sir, there's not much to tell. I am alone in the world. My mother died when I was quite young, and my father some three years ago. He was a Wall-street broker who had some sort of influence with Nathaniel Pegram; though how he obtained it I never could tell, for they were most dissimilar characters. However, he used it to secure me the position I had before he died. We were quite chums, my father and I, and I felt his loss very

deeply, the more so as it left me alone in the world."

"Died about three years ago—Wall-street broker? Why, it must have been Chester Manly."

"Yes, that was his name."

"Then I knew him well. He captured me during the war, and I shall never forget his manly treatment of his prisoners."

"That was in keeping with his character," said Frank, flushing proudly.

"Young man, do you know anything about horses?" asked the captain, abruptly.

"Yes. My father was quite an enthusiast on turf matters, and I inherited much of his love for such sports, but of course I have had little opportunity of late to indulge any propensity in that line."

"Well, I am getting a little tired of doing so much detail work, particularly as I am contemplating some changes that will occupy much of my time. Besides, I never was much of a book-keeper, and my accounts need straightening, badly. How would you like to take a spin to Long Branch, Saratoga, etc., and wind up on a blue-grass farm?"

"Captain Breckenridge," answered Frank, speaking very slowly, "if you are influenced in making this offer by the feeling that you were instrumental in causing the loss of my former position, I beg you will not allow yourself to have such an impression. My relations with Mr. Pegram have been strained for some weeks. What happened to-day was bound to occur shortly. There was no sympathy between us, and besides, he really seems to see no difference between his clerks and his servants. Perhaps if I had

any one to look after I might not be so independent ; but, situated as I am, I had long determined that the first time he treated me in a disrespectful manner I would resent it. Therefore I beg you not to feel at all responsible for my leaving."

"I thought you took him up rather short," said the Kentuckian, "But I assure you that I have recently resolved to get a man to assist me in the executive part of my business. I liked your looks from the first and since I know you to be Chester Manly's son, I shall not be sorry to repay to you some small part of my debt to him. I guess the terms won't stand much in the way between us. Will you come?"

"Most gladly," answered the younger man heartily.

"When?"

"When you like. I have nothing to keep me. I am ready now."

"At once?"

"Immediately."

"All right. Here's a long letter from my stable-boss whose expenses have been much heavier than I think they should be, but I can't make his accounts out and so have rather let things drift."

Without a word the younger man seated himself and was soon so deeply engrossed that he was unconscious of the keen eyes fixed upon him with a touch of humor as well as satisfaction. For once Wicklyff Breckenridge had found a man as prompt at decisions as himself.

CHAPTER III.

"WHAT on earth makes you so nervous, Natalie?" asked Mrs. Dulany, two days later. "You are entirely unlike yourself. You are usually the soul of composure."

"What time does the Eastern mail arrive?" asked Natalie irrelevantly.

"There it is now," replied Mrs. Dulany, starting to her feet and darting away, with Natalie closely following.

Natalie found two letters for her, one in the cramped heavy chirography of her father; the other was not familiar to her, but the bold free strokes of the pen seemed so characteristic of her lover that she readily guessed it must be from him.

The letter was a brief synopsis of the writer's journey to New York and a very fair account of the interview with her father, given in the terse, vigorous language peculiar to the captain.

"I suppose," he wrote, "I should have kept my temper; but I could not and did not, and regrets are useless. But, Natalie, what I said to your father about you, I meant from the bottom of my heart. I am neither the adventurer he seemed to think me, nor a romantic school-boy, but a man a little too old for you perhaps, yet able to protect you from the evil

haps of the world and shelter you from its storms. I offer you the entire devotion of my nature, and I am not a man to do anything by halves. I ask in return as entire a trust in me. I believe I can make you happy. I therefore ask you to keep your promise and come to me at once, even though by so doing you must literally leave all others to cleave only to me. Do not decide this hastily, but ask your own heart if you can trust yourself entirely to

“Yours now and always,

“WICK.”

The other letter was a brief characteristic epistle. It read:

“Dear Natalie,—

“A wild horse-jockey from somewhere in the South, has been here asking me for your hand. He got some plain talk instead, and became insolent and abusive when he found I saw through his designs. Of course you could not be interested seriously in him, but if you should you may as well dismiss the thought from your head. *You know why you cannot marry without my consent*, and knowing me you must understand that after our interview he could never darken my door again. Further words are useless.

“Your affectionate

“FATHER.”

The letter fell from her listless fingers. The wrinkles deepened in the broad white brow. Every gesture and attitude betokened anxious thought, gradually

deepening into pain. The noble head sunk as under a heavy weight. Silent and tearless, she sat gazing into vacancy before her, with unseeing eyes and brain busy with her voiceless grief.

How long she sat there she never knew, but the shadows of evening were lengthening and the golden sunset tinging the western sky when she painfully arose and went to her writing desk. Many letters did she commence, many destroy; until finally, after much hesitation, she concluded the following might do:

“Dear Captain Breckenridge,” it began, “my own brave noble friend; you cannot imagine how distressed I am at the turn affairs have taken. I do not in the least blame you; indeed were it any other than my father I would glory in your manly bearing throughout. But, my dear friend, how can I say what I must? My love, my troth are pledged to you. No other man can ever claim the one; the other I will keep some day, but not now, nor can I say when. Oh, my darling! have faith in me. Believe in my assurance that what you ask cannot now be, though if you will wait for me, I promise, oh! so gladly, that I will some day do all in my power to reward your confidence. I can say no more, for my head and heart seem numb with this great trouble. Good-bye and believe that I shall never be any other than

“Your own,

“NATALIE.”

CHAPTER IV.

SOME six weeks have elapsed and the scene changes to the grounds of the Louisville Jockey Club. It is the first day of the Fall meeting. The season is pretty well on to a close; horse-men from all parts of the country have flocked to this, one of their last opportunities to increase their winnings, or "catch even" on their losings. The capacious stables are crowded with the finest horses the world contains. Over in the paddock the knowing ones are gathered, anxiously scanning the contesting thoroughbreds, or discussing their prospects. Here and there stern, hard-featured, weather-beaten trainers are giving instructions, to the little monkey-like jockeys, whilst gliding through the crowd, with ears ever alert and downcast, equivocal smiles, the "touts," the jackals of the turf, "pick up their pointers," or sell their "tips," to such as they can beguile into purchasing.

Over beyond the track is the Grand Stand, crowded to its utmost capacity with the most beautiful women in the world—at least every Kentuckian religiously believes as much—in their holiday attire, gay with brilliant parasols and flying ribbons. The "gentlemen sports," "dudes" "plungers," or whatever name you may choose to designate them by, dressed in immaculate, if somewhat pronounced, attire, lounge easily from the side of some beauty with whom they have wagered

bonbons against gloves, and make their way dexterously through the surging throng below, where they risk sums that would turn many feminine cheek white if they but knew.

One of those indescribable, but simultaneous, movements of the crowd in the Grand Stand, which is termed "sensation," for want of a better name, occurs. From every lip comes the exclamation, "The coaching party!" Everybody seeming anxious to tell what everybody already knows, as, swinging around through the gate, with blowing of horns and flying of ribbons, three coaches come in on a full gallop. The band strikes up an inspiring air, the party descends; the members make their way to the places reserved for them, the sensation subsides, and the chatter from thousands of feminine voices again fills the air. The Fall meeting seems about inaugurated.

"Mars' Wick! Oh, Mars' Wick!"

Captain Breckenridge stopped as he was making his way across the track to the "infield."

"Hello! What's up, Zeke?"

"What's up? heaps up, dat's what dey is! heaps up, I tell you! ya-as sah," and the intelligent black face and woolly head were wagging in a most portentously solemn way.

Accustomed to blacks all his life, the captain knew at once that Zeke had something of more than usual import to tell him.

"Come over here out of the crowd and tell me what you have to say, and tell me quick, for I have much to do."

"You'll have heaps more to do after I tell you."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, sah, me'n' Yaller Joe was playin' 'creps' down behin' de stables when we hear footsteps. We kind o' lay low, 'cos we's feared it was cops. Bye-'m-bye long comes jockey Gibson 'n dat red-headed, chicken-fighter what's always hanging around 'tout-ing' and foolin.'"

"Gibson, who rides Aramis?"

"Ya-as, sah! Well, sah, dey done fixed up a plan for to th'ow dat race."

"*What!*" gasped Captain Breckenridge.

"Deed dey did! Gibson was to have five hundred in cash and five hundred in 'French tickets' on de 'Ghost.'"

"You are sure there can be no mistake?"

"Mars' Wick, we was raised togedder; did you ever think I was just a natural born darn fool?"

The question was stronger than any assurance, and brought no immediate answer.

"Enough to do, indeed," muttered the white man, thinking deeply for a moment.

"Here, Zeke! he suddenly exclaimed, all animation in a moment. "Go at once for Major Howard, owner of Aramis, and if you see Yellow Joe, bring him along, and meet me in the Judges' stand. They are bringing the horses upon the track already."

The dusky jockey started off on a quick trot, whilst the tall Kentuckian strode straight into the Judges' stand, where his story created a profound sensation.

He had scarcely finished it when Zeke, Yellow Joe

and Major Howard came up in the order named, the latter gentleman in a state of mind bordering on insanity. Question after question fell upon the two jockeys, until even the choleric Major, whose faith in Gibson had been boundless, was finally convinced of his duplicity.

"Zeke, have you a mount for this race?" asked the club's president.

"Ya-as sah. I rides Nimble Bill, sah."

"Have you, Joe?"

"No sah."

"Go get a jacket and mount Aramis. The other matter can be investigated later. That is satisfactory to you, Major?"

"Perfectly, sir. For you, boys, come and see me after the race and I will reward you handsomely. Captain Breckenridge, it is useless for me to attempt to express my obligation. To most men the fact of your having a horse entered in a race and discovering the favorite was to be pulled, might have made a difference. To you, of course, it made none, but I cannot refrain from wishing there were more men of your stripe on the turf."

And the weather-beaten old turf-man departed with a bow of so much dignity that every man in the stand instinctively raised his hat in response.

"I say, Wick, who is going to win this?" asked Randolph, a moment later.

"Nimble Bill," sententiously.

"Stop your chaff. Everybody knows it's between Aramis and the Ghost. But which is the better?"

"Well, they've changed Aramis' jockey."

"The devil, they have! Well, that settles it for me," and off he went to make his wagers.

Breckenridge looked after him with a quiet shrug of his broad shoulders and made his way leisurely to the Grand Stand, where he was soon shaking hands right and left, for he was an universal favorite.

Natalie was there, the troubled look that her face had worn for the past six weeks, banished temporarily by the excitement of her first horse-race. Her eyes grew brighter and softer, as her lover made his way to her side. The warm pressure of their hands was the only evidence they gave of any understanding between them; but that was firm, clinging, reassuring.

"They are ready for the start!" panted Randolph, as, out of breath from the exertions he had made to secure his pool-tickets, he clambered up beside them.

"I say, Wick," he whispered, "I thought it just possible you might not have been chaffing and I got a saver on Nimble Bill."

Breckenridge nodded, but he was too engrossed in the horses to speak.

Several false starts were made. Just as patience was wearing out arose the indescribable murmur which is heard when twenty thousand people tell each other simultaneously—"They're off!"

The distance was one mile and a quarter. Just before starting Major Howard had given Yellow Joe his instructions.

"Watch the Ghost!" he said, pay no attention to any other horse in the race. Keep half a length behind him, no matter how he goes, and beat him home

on the quarter stretch. Never mind the other horses; beat the Ghost and you win the race."

"Run him from eend to eend, as usual," said the venerable owner of the Ghost. "Git agoin' 's soon's you kin and never stop till you git thar."

With such instructions for the two favorites, it bid fair to be a "cracking race"—and it was.

Down the first quarter they came, well bunched, at first; but the Ghost was already forging ahead, Yellow Joe half a length behind on Aramis, Nimble Bill well in the rear. Around to the first quarter-pole and on to the half-mile pole there were but few changes. The pace was terrific. The two leaders had let a wide space of daylight between them and the bunch, of which Zeke on Nimble Bill, holding him well in hand, now began to take the lead. Nimble Bill had been running easily, under a pull, until the three-quarter pole was reached; then Zeke loosened his rein and felt his horse, who responded gallantly.

But it was not until they swung into the quarter-stretch that the riding began. Yellow Joe, riding to instructions, shook his rein and began to ride for all his horse was worth. The Ghost, harassed by the steady manner in which Aramis had stuck to him, showed signs of temper and of distress. His jockey began playing with whip and spur as did Joe. The crowd began first to mutter and then to shout: "The Ghost has it!" "No, Aramis!" "Aramis is ahead!" "The Ghost!" "Anybody's race!"

Just then a powerful voice thunders, "Nimble Bill! look at Nimble Bill!" and a dark-chestnut horse, hitherto unnoticed, came along with a burst of

speed rarely equalled on any track. Zeke, riding almost on his neck, "rolling" him, spurring, whipping, driving him to the top of his speed, getting out of him every ounce of muscle and all of his reserve force, seemed to be lifting him from the ground.

Nobly was he responding, and before the now maddened crowd could realize it, Nimble Bill, an almost unknown horse, had beaten the two crack horses of the season by a head; had won everlasting fame for himself and some twenty thousand dollars for his owner.

The scene that ensued is beyond description. Betters on "short" horses are always more demonstrative than backers of the favorite, and this time they went fairly mad. Hats, canes, umbrellas were flung in the air; men shouted, yelled, danced, and in many instances, hugged each other, while the philosophical book-makers calmly handed out cash to the winners and took bets for future events, without change of countenance.

On the Grand Stand our hero had remained like a statue carved in marble, his left hand holding his field-glass to his eyes, his right resting on Randolph's shoulder. The next morning the latter found four distinct bruises on his shoulder, where the hand had rested.

Natalie felt for a moment as if she must faint. Unused to such sport in any shape, the additional interest of seeing her lover win such a race, almost proved too much for her. Her cheeks and lips paled, and but for a reassuring pressure of the hand from the captain, she would surely have betrayed herself.

She mastered her emotion, however, by a great effort, and sat unnoticed in the general excitement until her color returned.

Congratulations were showered on the stalwart Kentuckian and received by him with a polite *non-chalance* that would have been perfect had not the steel-gray eyes been fairly ablaze.

"Why did you not tell a fellow?" asked Randolph.

"I did."

"When?"

"Not twenty minutes ago. You asked me who would win and I told you."

"Yes, but who would have believed it?"

"Now, Ranse, if you expected me to persuade you to bet on a horse that only two people in the world really thought would win, you don't know me. Besides you are like nine betters out of ten. You hear one fact, consider it a tip, and rush off to get in your bet before anybody else finds it out. In the first place Aramis beat the Ghost anyway, even with a strange jockey; then along comes another horse that you never asked your best friend, his owner, about. You are too rash for a better, you plunger!"

"Oh, go ahead, Mr. Knowall! Because your horse can run fast you know all about horses, betting, and philosophy generally."

"Well, the ladies will excuse us. Come on and let us go and tell Zeke that he is the greatest jockey living. He deserves all praise for the finest piece of riding I ever saw."

A few minutes later they were in the infield.

"Well, Zeke, I am delighted with you. Your riding certainly proves you are not a natural born fool, anyway."

"Ya-as sah, I suhtinly did git all the go out er Bill they wus in him. But if dem two hosses hadn't run each other to def, I dont b'lieve I'd ever come in ahead. Dey jist wanted to kill each other an' didn't pay no 'tention to me."

Zeke's black intelligent face glowed with the praises of his master and his consciousness of their being deserved.

"What dey gwine to do wid Gibson?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh, his master discharged him and the judges have ruled him off the track."

"He's a mighty bad man, Mars' Wick an' you'd better look out for 'im. He 'most killed er man in Lexington for heap less'n you've done to him."

"What did you do, Wick?" asked Randolph.

The details of Zeke's discovery were told him.

"Why, Zeke, you are a most intelligent colored person!"

"I'se a right smart *nigger*!" with marked emphasis on the last word.

"Zeke don't like to be called colored," laughed the captain.

"Why not?"

"Let him tell you for himself. Why is it, Zeke?"

The jockey drew himself up with a great deal of native dignity.

"Well, sah," he said, addressing himself to Randolph, "its jest dis way. The good Lord done gim

me a black skin. Callin' it colored don't make it any lighter. 'Sides, what I want make it any lighter for? Ef de Lord make my skin black, He wanted it black. He didn't make my heart black. An' I'll tell you what, sah, it seems to me de best way to keep from bein' 'shamed of bein' called 'nigger' is to act so't people will think *nigger* is praise. Ef de black people would start out to make folks feel like dat, 'stead goin' round callin' each other colored, dey'd be heap more respected. I ain't "colored pusson". Jockey Gibson he's 'colored pusson.' I's nigger."

"Well, by George! Zeke, whether you are right or wrong, you think like a philosopher, and what is better, like a man. I want to shake hands with you on the manliest speech I have heard in many a day.

"Thankee, sah. Much 'bleeged for sayin' so." And the black face gleamed again.

"Where's Frank?"

"I dunno, sah. Last I seed he was over to the stables looking at Yaller Jack fixing up for the steeple-chase to-morrow."

"Reckon I'll go over and take a look myself. Want to go along, Ranse?"

"No, I think I'll go back to the ladies."

"All right! I'll join you in half an hour." And with a stride rendered considerably more elastic by the result of his big *coup*, he made his way back amongst the stables to his own horses.

Gradually his step slackened; his hands in his pockets, his eyes downcast, he lost himself in thought. Just as Frank Manly emerged from one of the stable doors, carrying a heavy field-glass in his hand, a dark

form, bearing something that glittered in its right hand, came suddenly from behind another and rushed upon the unwary captain some thirty yards away. But before the gleaming murderous blade had time to descend, the field-glasses, propelled by the dexterous arm of the young New Yorker, were shattered in a hundred pieces on the head of the would-be assassin, who fell to the earth stunned and bleeding.

One glance told the Kentuckian the truth. He sprang on the prostrate ruffian, disarmed and bound him without waiting for further explanation.

“Gibson, the jockey!” he cried.

“Yes, pretty near Gibson the murderer,” said Frank dryly.

“Well, Frank, you certainly saved my life. At the expense of your best field-glasses too,” he added more lightly. “But how in the world could you have hit that fellow as you did? I never saw a quicker or straighter throw in my life!”

“Oh, I am a base-ball player,” was the quiet reply.

CHAPTER V.

THE largest and most successful Fall meeting of the Louisville Jockey Club was in full blast. Every day coaching parties supplemented by "drags" and every style of vehicle, filled with the beauty and fashion of Louisville, were formed. After the races they adjourned to the Club-house and champagne. At night they went to the theatre, where a clever Opera Bouffe company was holding the boards, and finished with a supper at the Pendennis Club. It was one continuous round of dissipation.

"Frank," said the captain one morning as they sat smoking alone in the reading-room of the Pendennis, "I want to say something to you, and I want you to take it right."

"Very well. I know you could only mean to do me a kindness. Besides I am not thin-skinned."

"Well, you don't understand our Kentucky girls. They are a noble set of women at bottom, but our customs sanction a great deal more coquetry than you will find in the East. Their freedom from the *chaperone* system teaches them to take care of themselves and the independence thus learned makes them more daring. Understand me, I don't mean they are fast. Indeed in my knocking around various sections of the country, I find rather less fastness in

Kentucky than elsewhere. But they will and do flirt and some of them don't mean everything they say. Be on your guard, Frank, for you stand now, as far as my observation goes, in a fair way to be flung by as skittish a filly as Kentucky can produce."

"Thank you, Captain Breckenridge, I don't fear such a catastrophe."

"There, I feared I should offend. But what I said was meant in kindness."

"Of course it was. I spoke churlishly, but believe me, I am not insensible to your many kindly actions."

"That's more like yourself. I am a lonesome sort of a fellow and have taken a great liking to you. Strange," he muttered, as he lounged into the card room, "strange how a man with solid horse-sense on all other subjects should allow himself to be hooked, played with, landed, and finally left high and dry by a little chit scarce out of short skirts. Well, it's a lesson all must learn sooner or later. Only one never learns after all, for I am a bigger fool at forty than I ever was before. I have fancied myself in love twenty times, but this—Heigho! 'there's no fool like an old fool!'" And heaving this relic of past wisdom from the bottom of his heart and accompanying it with a sigh so portentous as to almost make the windows rattle, coming as it did from the bottom of his capacious chest, he lighted a fresh cigar, stepped out of the door, where his dog-cart waited him, and drove straight to the abode of his own enslaver.

Randolph was there before him, looking strangely

flushed, as the servant ushered him in; somewhat unceremoniously. Mrs. Dulany was with him, a trifle pale, but perfectly self-possessed and cordial.

"Natalie will be down in a moment, captain, are we late?"

"No, just in good time. The first race is a colt race and uninteresting anyway."

The answer was as conventional as the question, but the keen gray eyes were filled with a new and curious light.

Just then Natalie entered, a dream of white enlivened with delicate heliotrope ribbons, a broad hat trimmed with the same color shading her glorious face, which lightened so perceptibly, as she greeted our hero, as to cause two of the party to smile quietly, and the third to feel a warm triumphant thrill pass over him like a wave of heavenly melody.

"Why are you so silent?" asked Natalie, as they drove along.

"Because I never get to see you alone, because there is much I have to say to you, and most of all, because there is much I want you to say to me."

"There is little I can say to you—Wick." His first name came with timid hesitation from her agitated lips, and he forgot, for the moment, his previous discontent, and became almost intoxicated with the flood of tenderness that swept over him.

"You darling!" he muttered between his set teeth, with a depth of feeling that made her start and tremble with indefinable emotion.

"Look out!"

The exclamation came from a passing vehicle, so

nearly colliding that it took all the captain's skill in horsemanship, yes, and all the strength of his wrists, to avoid the accident.

"I see I can't talk with you here. When can I see you?"

"You go to the dinner to-night?"

"Yes, but I want you all to myself. We cannot talk freely there."

"Very well, come to-morrow at half-past ten, if you can arise that early, and we can have a couple of hours at any rate."

"Will not that be too early for the household you are visiting?"

"No, indeed. Mr. Randolph came this morning elirlirlier than that."

Again that queer look came in his face, "All right. It's not too early for me."

By this time they had reached the track, and dismounting, joined the coaching party. Conspicuous among these was Frank, his close-cut fair hair clustering about his open, strong face. He was bending over a bright brunette, whose clear olive complexion and luminous brown eyes formed a striking contrast with him. They were undoubtedly flirting desperately. Her eyes met his with a half-alluring, half-mocking look that was tantalizing him to the point of madness. Just then it suited her to assume a dejected appearance.

"Why so *triste*," he asked, solicitously.

"Oh, nothing! Probably the watermelon I had for lunch was not quite up to the standard," she answered,

the troubled expression deepening on her *piquante* face.

“How absurd you can be!” he said, almost impatiently. “What makes you so thoughtful?”

“Ah, Mr. Manly; because I am a young girl does not prevent my having serious thoughts. I wonder if you would understand my crotchets?”

“You might try me. I am not always obtuse.”

“Well, then,” she answered slowly, holding up a magnificent Jacqueminot rose that had formed a conspicuous ornament to her attire, “one of them is, I will never give this kind of rose to a man, until I can find one—one whom I could like better than myself.”

The arrival of our hero and his party prevented Frank’s answering. The conversation became general, and all attempts to sub-divide were just then useless. Some twenty minutes passed so, Frank and Heloise Churchill remaining in their original positions, but separated now by a chattering crowd passing the morning compliments preparatory to settling down.

Suddenly and quietly, Frank extended his hand and it required a keen ear to detect the eager ring in his carefully guarded voice.

“Won’t you give me that flower, Miss Churchill?”

The little hand went suddenly towards the throat, where the flower had been re-pinned, fell again; then, with an impetuous, almost passionate gesture the rose was placed in his hand and the dark glowing eyes averted. The contact of hand and flower acted like an electric shock upon the young New Yorker. His face paled and he almost reeled; then followed a wave of blood, dyeing his forehead and neck, as his

senses swam in an unknown sea of high hopes and intoxicating anticipations.

This by-play was unnoticed by all save one pair of keen eyes, now glittering with a sardonic humor.

"Poor Frank!" he muttered, "he has had his warning and won't profit by it. He has laid the train for an explosion that will send him higher than Gilderoy's Kite. But that girl had better be a little careful too, for Frank is not a man to be fooled long. I have done my best; now let us see what the result is to be."

"I say, Cap, I dropped in to see you this morning and missed you," said a florid handsome man of about forty years of age, rather too youthfully dressed, but still *distingue* in appearance.

"Yes? I am sorry I missed you Dulany. I was at the Court testifying against Frank's friend."

"Who, Gibson?"

"Yes."

"Oh! do tell us what they did with that horrid fellow," cried Heloise Churchill, "I take the greatest interest in the case; Mr. Manly was so brave and noble," and her glorious eyes turned on the young man a look which sent another electric thrill through him.

"Indeed he was," said the captain, warmly. "Well, the charge this morning was disorderly conduct and he got ten days imprisonment. Something was said about indicting him for assault with intent to kill, carrying deadly weapons and the like; but that would have necessitated my staying over to testify against him and he is not worth it. By the way, Frank, speaking of deadly weapons, as you are

deprived of your armature since the last engagement, I thought I would replenish your arsenal."

So saying, he unslung from his shoulder and handed to Frank an innocent-looking case that, on being opened, proved to be a pair of mother-of-pearl glasses, on the gold mounting of which was engraved Frank's full name, the date of the encounter, and the motto, "True courage is best shown by quick thought and prompt action."

"Oh, my ! isn't that gorgeous ?" exclaimed Heloise, and the present was passed from hand to hand.

The truth was, that though Frank had passed the matter over lightly, and even the captain had contented himself with one or two expressions of the heartiest commendation, the women were not disposed to let such an adventure be so slighted. They had a real live hero among them, and they proceeded to make much of him in a way that would have turned a less evenly balanced brain. It was this universal admiration that had determined Heloise Churchill to win him for herself.

"Shall I come early to-morrow ?" asked Randolph, under his breath, of Mrs. Dulany.

"Natalie expects the captain to-morrow. I fear we would be *de trop*."

The white, aristocratic face gave no evidence of any emotion, and the soft *trainante* voice was unshaken.

Something very like an oath struggled to his lips, but was smothered beneath his heavy mustache. Controlling himself, he asked, in as matter-of-course a tone as he could master :

“When shall I have an opportunity to see you alone?”

“Oh, Mr. Randolph, have you heard of the Cave party?” asked Mrs. Dulany, entirely ignoring his question.

“No! Who, what, and when?”

“Mr. Dulany is organizing it; Natalie, Heloise Churchill, Captain Breckenridge, Mr. Manly and a lot of others are the ‘who;’ a two-days’ trip to the Mammoth Cave is the ‘what,’ and next Sunday morning is the ‘when.’”

“Are you going?”

“No; Mrs. Mayhew chaperons the party.”

There was the faintest tinge of sarcasm in the voice, though the manner was free from embarrassment.

“Well, then, I can——” a look from her stopped him, and he said no more; but his face was cleared of its clouds, and he hummed lightly one of Waldteufel’s newest waltzes under his breath.

“You will go with us to the Cave?” Heloise was asking Frank.

“Nothing could induce me to miss it. I have never been and know nothing of the *convenances*; but if it be the correct thing to volunteer my services as escort, please consider it done after the most approved style.”

“Indeed there is just such a thing, as you will find to your sorrow. Acting as escort means helping one over all sorts of slippery and steep places. Your brawny right arm—that’s the correct phrase, is it not?—will find much better employment than throw-

ing missiles at other people's heads, though not so remunerative, judging from the prize you have just won."

"There is another prize my brawny right arm would wear itself out to win, far more valuable than any field glass."

"Yes! But could you see through it as well?" and the mock-innocent look made the *piquante* face simply fascinating.

Frank groaned, for he knew the look.

Heloise Churchill was no fool in any sense. Fond of admiration and of flirting, she had naturally a bright mind, and few could cope with her in her favorite style of badinage. She had some sterling qualities, too, but the universal success her beauty and repartee had won for her was bidding fair to cause them to be snowed under by more superficial thoughts and emotions. In other words, she was being "spoiled" by adulation.

"Ten o'clock will not be too early for you?" asked the captain of Natalie.

"No, but not before. Housekeepers must have some consideration shown them."

And so, despite the fact that the conversation had been general all the afternoon, much had been said in few sentences.

Just then the last race of the day was finished, and headed by the portly president and his charming wife, the entire party made their way to the Clubhouse, there to await the passing of the crowd and to refresh nature with a sandwich and a glass of champagne.

Peyton Dulany had come with the rest, paying the most assiduous attention to the little blonde, Mrs. Mayhew. Fifteen years before he had married an heiress solely for her money, although she had much more to attract. Then a singularly handsome man, he had completely infatuated her, so much so that she quarreled with her mother and the friends who ventured to warn her of his true character. He was well enough in his way, but his intense vanity was the cause of subsequent unhappiness. She was sufficiently in love with him to have overlooked many faults, but he, not content with ordinary demonstration, took delight in deliberately exciting her jealousy, so that all the world might see how much she loved him. No love could stand such a test long, and after years of silent suffering, she had grown to thoroughly despise him. He still attributed her aversion to outbreaks of jealousy, and attempted to bring her to terms by still more open flirtations.

Just now Mrs. Mayhew was his fancy, a feeling the white-headed, albino-looking little woman was warmly encouraging, if not reciprocating, and they were approaching very close to the boundary line of discretion.

The band that had been playing all day before the grand stand, came over to the Club-house. The crowd had all dispersed, save the occupants of the Club-house, and as the inspiring strains of one of Offenbach's melodies floated on the air, a quadrille on the green was suggested and eagerly adopted; and soon twinkling feet were flying over the blue grass with an abandon only to be found amongst Southern

girls, secure from fear of being misunderstood.

“Did you ever see a handsomer picture than that?” asked Margie Dulany, as she and Randolph sat on the broad piazza of the Club-house and watched the dancers. She pointed as she spoke to the captain and Natalie.

And indeed it was a picture worth remembering. He had thrown aside his hat. His wavy brown hair, as yet untinged with gray, fell negligently off his massive forehead; his brown handsome face, set off by the flowing mustache, seemed fairly to glow with perfect health; his athletic figure showing to its best advantage in his negligé racing costume, and his gray eyes shining with a soft light, as he leaned with unconscious grace against a small tree and looked at the noble girl beside him.

She too, was animated. Her lissome figure seemed charged with nervous energy; her large blue eyes glowed with a brighter lustre, and the noble poise of her head seemed more queenly. Around them both, forming a natural frame, fell the overhanging branches of the tree.

“The handsomest couple I ever saw,” replied Randolph. “But the music has commenced again, and this time a waltz. Surely you will let me have one turn with you?”

“Out on the grass? Oh, no!”

“Well, the piazza is broad enough, just one turn!”

She looked around; every one was enjoying the spirit of the occasion. Over in a remote part of the yard her husband and Mrs. Mayhew were drinking

champagne and laughing—the explosive laughter that follows the *double entendre*.

For answer she put her hand on his shoulder, he passed his arm around her, and they glided off together in perfect step and time. Twilight was just falling and objects becoming a little indistinct, seemed to separate them, first from their companions, then from the entire world. The band was playing *Mon Reve* and soon it seemed to them that there was nothing in existence but that air and themselves. He guided her gently around a corner to an obscure part of the piazza. The band had now reached the second theme of the air, and as the cornet took the long wailing tenor note, their lips met, as with one impulse, and their souls seem to float out into illimitable space upon that strange wistful melody. Not a word was spoken, not a step missed, and as their lips separated from that wild kiss, they swung back into observable space.

It all occupied less than ten minutes, and yet the emotion of ages seemed to have been crowded in that time.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning Breckenridge was punctual to the hour in calling at the Dulany residence. He did not have long to wait before Natalie entered, attired for the races.

"I thought I would do all my dressing before you came," she explained, "so as to give you as much of my time as possible.

What answer *could* an enraptured lover make to so considerate a speech but to wind his stalwart arms about her, drew her yielding form to his breast and imprint one long burning lingering kiss, in which all the impatience of his waiting, all the passion of his nature, all the supreme content of the moment seemed to express themselves upon her warm responsive lips.

For several moments he held her thus. Neither of them knew how long, for at such a crisis all conception of time is lost; but he finally released her and leading her to a divan, seated himself beside her and holding her in a half embrace, his left arm encircling her shoulders, her head nestling on his bosom, his right hand clasping both hers, they remained for a long while in happy silence.

At last he ventured upon the subject so near to his heart.

“Natalie I do not wish to cause you needless pain, but tell me what you can, sweet heart, of the reasons which deprive me of the supremest happiness earth affords.”

The happy light died out of her eyes, her face assumed an expression of keenest pain.

“Oh, Wick! I cannot tell you anything. Believe me, my darling, I love you and if you will wait for me, I will come to you some day. You have the one great love of my life, but I cannot tell you more, dear.”

“Why not? Can’t you trust me?”

“I am willing, nay, anxious, to trust you with my life’s happiness, dear; more than that I could not do. The secret is not all mine, and I could not tell you on that account. And I would rather die than have you know it. I am not to blame! There is not one single action or thought of my life that I could not lay bare before you, but I cannot marry without my father’s consent.”

“You would not let property considerations—”

“I would rather live with you in one of those log cabins I saw from the car window coming on here, than in a palace without you.”

“It is not that your sense of duty to your father—”

“No! a thousand times, no! No consideration of that sort influences me. Of course I have a natural feeling of duty to my parent, but in a matter involving my life’s happiness I should not permit that to stand in the way. You could never guess—you must never try to guess my reasons. Oh, believe in me, trust me my darling! I *cannot* tell you more.”

"I do believe, I do trust you, my own, my sweet! Though an angel from Heaven should disparage you, if you looked at me like that I should disbelieve him. But one thing I do not like. You say you would not have me know for the world. Have you so little confidence in my love as to believe it could not stand any test short of the loss of your affection?"

"Well, perhaps I was wrong in that, but the secret is not mine—the secret is not mine!"

The last words came like a wail and smote the Kentuckian's heart like a knife.

"Never mind! do not distress yourself," he cried. "I believe in you, I trust you! I will wait forever, if need be. I ask no further assurance, but pin my faith, as I have my love, blindly upon you."

"My noble, gallant, trusting hero!" she whispered, placing her grand arms around his neck, and for the first time kissing him voluntarily.

"My darling, my wife!"

Frank Manly was ever at Heloise's elbow, proving his devotion by a thousand little attentions. But whenever he attempted to grow more pointed, he met with a bewildering flow of badinage, or perhaps a willful misunderstanding of his meaning that drove him fairly wild. The fact was, however, Heloise was getting a little frightened. The straight-forward character of her lover did not admit of much evasion. He loved her; he had received sufficient encouragement to warrant strong hopes of his love being reciprocated and although baffled temporarily, he showed

a restiveness indicating that he would not stand much further trifling.

In this emergency she bethought her of the strongest, if one of the commonest expedients of her sex. She would make him jealous. To this end she contrived to call to her side a certain John Sound, a veteran bachelor whose name had figured for many years in Louisville society. Heloise managed to find this excuse and that reason for keeping Major Sound near her, until the handsome blue eyes of the young New Yorker began to be opened in a double sense. At first he could hardly believe his own senses, but as she continued to play the battery of her charms on the worn old heart of her veteran admirer, all became but too clear.

The climax was reached, however, when, in a spirit of willful coquetry, she pinned a Jacqueminot rose upon the lapel of the major's coat. Without allowing a muscle of his countenance to change, Manly left her under a convenient pretext and wandered out in the air to pull himself together.

The sudden revelation of her character brought back the caution his friend and employer had given him a few days before, while in the Club room. He lighted his cigar and prepared to look the situation squarely in the face. There was no doubt about it, he had simply been used by a heartless coquette as a plaything for her vanity. And added to the bitterness of his disillusionizing was the reflection that at least one person and perhaps others, had watched the entire procedure understandingly. He felt as one awakened from a pleasant dream. It was

a pity to lose such visions, but after all they were only visions and so—let them go.

Returning to the house he passed the captain and stopped him just long enough to say :

“ You tried to prevent me from making a fool of myself, but I would not listen. I have about come the cropper you predicted, but not exactly in the same way. There are no bones broken, however, and the bruises will soon heal.”

Wick looked him a moment straight in the eye.

“ I believe you, my boy. Want a stroll ? ”

“ Thank you ; just had one. I hope your thoughts will be pleasanter than mine. Good night ! ” and he deliberately and unromantically went to bed.

The next day he met Heloise's eye with composure as unruffled and undisturbed as if he had not lain awake half the night cursing his own folly and her coquetry. Nor did his demeanor change when she, fearing she had gone too far, sought to again draw him to her side. Her innuendoes fell unheeded, or were taken in the most literal sense. He showed her exactly as much attention as he did other women in the party and no more. And so there was an entirely new feeling tugging at her heart-strings which greatly resembled remorse.

Meanwhile a different sort of scene was being enacted in the palatial residence of Peyton Dulany. Ransom Randolph had been beside himself with anticipation since that never to be forgotten waltz. He had known Margie Dulany long. Indeed his wife—for he was a widower—had been her class-mate at boarding-school and the two friends had kept

up their intimacy until the untimely death of the one which occurred shortly after the ill-starred marriage of the other. He had seen the brutal conduct of her husband, and his attempts to foil some of the subtle blows aimed by Dulany at his wife's peace had been the first bond of sympathy between them. It had grown to a deeper feeling unconsciously to both, until the opportunity and the temptation had come together and told each heart not only its own secret but the other's.

So when Sunday afternoon at last arrived, it was with a feeling of profound agitation, accompanied with assurance of success, that he called. He was ushered in and she almost immediately joined him.

No allusion was made to their last meeting. For a time they conversed upon indifferent subjects with an affectation of composure which their tremulous voices belied. Suddenly he arose and seating himself beside her, attempted to draw her gently to him. She repulsed him; he was not much astonished, for he expected some resistance. He renewed his attempt a little more forcibly. She still resisted, but he gently overcame her opposition and passing his arm around her, he held her to his breast and pressed a second burning kiss upon her quivering lips.

Then a most unexpected thing happened. Her hair had become loosened by the struggle and fell in waving masses around her. She slipped from his arms like a serpent and suddenly kneeling before him on the bear-skin rug, poured forth an impassioned entreaty that took his breath away.

“Oh, Ransom! have pity, be generous! Your wife

was my friend, and though, since the other day, I may be no longer worthy to claim that honor, once I was. I have been weak and wicked to allow you to come. I have no words of blame for you, but only myself. I am a wife, though an unloved one; a mother, though perhaps an unworthy one. Spare me! leave me! In the name of Heaven, do not tempt me! By the memory of your dead wife, I beseech you leave me now and forget you ever knew me!"

Her words came in a burning torrent from her lips; her slight but exquisitely moulded figure shaken with passion, her face filled with contending emotions. She presented a picture he never forgot.

The unexpected appeal, the manner in which it was made, and the memories it evoked—for Randolph had been a devoted husband—were too much for his self-command. Blinded with tears, he raised her from her knees, pressed one kiss on her forehead, took his hat and was gone!

CHAPTER VII.

THE racing season was over, and the pleasant party broken and scattered to their respective homes. Captain Breckenridge went to Nashville with Frank, following up the success of his now famous colt, with great vigor. Randolph, after a cordial and unembarrassed farewell to Mrs. Dulany, which took place in the presence of a number of people, had betaken himself to Virginia. Natalie had gone to New York to spend a few weeks with her father, but had arranged to meet Mrs. Dulany in December, at Jacksonville.

In due course of time, Natalie arrived at her destination, and installed herself comfortably in the luxurious residence of her father on Madison Avenue. She knew she must have a trying scene with him; she knew his overbearing nature and impetuous temper, but she had inherited much of his iron will, and supported as she was by her great love, she felt strong to meet his opposition.

She was in no hurry but took several days to mature her plans, or rather to get her "courage to the sticking point," awaiting a favorable opportunity. Matters were precipitated, however, one morning by the arrival of the mail. Whilst they were at breakfast a letter was handed Natalie, who took it with a most unmistakable blush and placed it by her plate for more leisurely perusal.

"Who is that letter from?" her father asked, somewhat sharply.

"Captain Wicklyffe Breckenridge."

The tones were quiet but her heart beat quicker as she realized the explanation must come.

"Captain Breckenridge! You mean that horse-jockey who came to me in August to ask your hand?"

"I mean the *gentleman* who visited you for that purpose."

"The man who insulted me in my own office, braved and defied me—the man whom I threatened to have ejected from my presence?"

"Yes, threatened, but did not do it, I believe."

The sarcasm came so quickly that at first he did not realize how thoroughly she was opposing him.

"How dare he, the scoundrel! how has he the insolence to address you after my telling him what I did? I can't understand his impertinence."

"Perhaps the fact that it was in reply to my letter may have influenced him somewhat."

"What!" he fairly gasped.

"I said that it was a reply to my letter to him."

"You—you wrote him? What—why! what the devil did you write him for?" His face was becoming purple and his lips ashen, as he realized that he was being again braved.

"Your language is not very polite, but as your curiosity is natural I will gratify it. I am engaged to be married to him."

"What!"—if his voice had been *forte* before, it was *fortissimo* now. "You, engaged to that red-faced, whisky-drinking, gambling, horse-jockey! That

bully who stalks about insulting people! That scheming fortune-hunter! that—that—” his very passion was too much for him and he paused and sank back in his chair, gasping and choking with fury.

Natalie had expected just such an outbreak, and consequently was prepared to bear it with calmness.

“If you have quite finished your catalogue of his vices I will reply to them. First, his family and standing in that most aristocratic of countries in which he has spent his life, is exceptionally high. Second, his fortune, though not large, places him far beyond the suspicion of fortune-hunting. Third, he is not in any sense a horse-jockey. He inherited a farm and horses from an ancestry of gentlemen horse-raisers in a community where such a business is regarded with approval and respect. He has conducted that business without reproach since his father’s death, and deserves credit for so doing. As for gambling and drinking, those are merely the epithets of an angry man, for you cannot know anything detrimental to his character. I, who know him well, *know* him to be a noble, chivalrous, high-minded gentleman, one whose love any woman might be proud of having won, and some day I will try to prove myself worthy his great, manly, noble heart.”

She had forgotten herself and him. Her mind had gone back to the many proofs of confidence, of enduring love he had given her, and her face was glorified with the love she had given him in return.

Her father gazed at her in amazement, brought back to himself by her unexpected outburst.

"Some day!" he repeated sneeringly, "so you expect to marry him 'some day?'"

"I most certainly do."

"Do you forget why you had best not marry without my consent?"

"No."

"And you expect me ever to give it?"

"No."

"And yet you say you will marry him 'some day,' knowing that I will never consent as long as I live!"

"As long as you live!"

"And you tell me—you dare tell me that you will await my death and marry him after that?"

"I tell you just that."

"You heartless, unfeeling, ungrateful girl! How can you deliberately tell me to my face that you are counting on my death?"

Some of his impetuosity of temper flashed from her eyes as she rose to her feet.

"How can I? I will tell you. All her married life you bullied and harassed my mother, breaking her spirit and hurrying her to an early grave. Me, you never could bully, for you know I do not fear you. When, after my mother's death, you became possessed of that fearful secret, the secret which you have held over me ever since, you have been able for the first time to conquer me. You call me heartless! How can you expect affection or gratitude in exchange for what you have given me. Do you suppose any one could *love* you, when, right now, in this case, for a whim—a mere whim—for you know nothing about Captain Breckenridge—you are will-

ing to imperil the whole of my future happiness! Because he did not cringe and bow to you, because he was a man and not afraid of you, you asperse his motives, traduce his character, and villify him to me. I tell you now, that I correspond with him—that I am going to Florida to meet him—thank God, my money is my own and I can go where I please—that I am engaged to him, and that I mean to marry him.”

She had lashed herself into a fury and stood now with her noble figure drawn to its full height, one grand arm raised in denunciation and her eyes ablaze with passion.

Like most high-tempered men, Nathaniel Pegram was appalled at the exhibition of a passion superior to his own. He was just a little frightened but determined to “bluff it through.”

“Suppose I should choose to tell now. What would your lover do then? Leave you fast enough, I dare say.”

“He would not. His love would support me through it all. But you won’t tell now.”

“Why will I not?”

“Because you only care to carry your point; and because if you did, you would loose your hold on me, and the first thing I should do would be to marry Captain Breckenridge.”

And without waiting for a reply, she swept out of the room like the queen of women she was, leaving him speechless and aghast.

Once in her room, however, the nervous tension loosened, and she fell on her bed sobbing and kissing the unread letter she had carried all through the

scene, in as close an approach to genuine hysterics as she had ever come in her life.

Her father, strangely quiet, put on his overcoat, stepped into his coupé and was driven to his office where he scarcely opened his lips all day, much to the marvel of his terrorized clerks.

CHAPTER VIII.

DONALD MACDONALD, as his name would indicate, was a Scotchman, but he had left his country when so young that his thoughts and language were thoroughly Americanized. His parents had come to Lexington when he was scarce two years of age and, dying shortly after, had left him among strangers and penniless. Kindly hands were stretched out to him, however, in that most hospitable of regions. His native shrewdness came to the assistance of his indefatigable industry, and now in his forty-seventh year, he had a tidy, well-stocked little farm held in his wife's name, in addition to a prosperous dry goods establishment in Lexington.

The sole fruit of his marriage was his daughter Jean, on whom he lavished the affections of his strong nature, and on whose education he had spared no expense. Jean MacDonald was at this time in her twenty-first year and was a daughter of whom any father might be proud. She was a sweet-faced, Scottish-looking lassie, with a head of thick curly hair, that was undeniably red—a rich, deep, glossy red.

Her dazzlingly fair complexion and light blue eyes contrasted so sharply with her peculiarly colored hair as to cause the beholder to look at her with a doubt most commonly resolved into downright admiration.

Heloise Churchill and Jean MacDonald had been room-mates and intimate friends at Vassar. The sweet, amiable and somewhat slow mind of the one forming a complement to the bright, alert, and at times sarcastic intellect of the other. In their classes Heloise was always first to speak and her recitations were erratic and often brilliant, whilst Jean was deliberate and often hesitating, but always solid. She never attempted a superstructure until her substructure was thoroughly grounded.

After the Cave trip, Heloise saw no more of Frank, a circumstance which, after surprising her very much, began to annoy her and finally to pain her. The fact dawned on her that the blond-haired young athlete had grown very necessary to her. How many times she repented the heedless coquetry that had cost her his esteem! Other men had allowed her to do as she pleased, and she had invariably ended by pleasing to do without them. But this one, who so coldly turned from her at the first attempt she made to trifle with him, was a new experience.

As time passed and she realized that Frank had gone to the farm near Lexington, without the idea of returning to Louisville, she was confronted with the idea of a permanent separation from him. The case had now become desperate. She must do something, and she cudgeled her keen brain for an expedient.

Just at this crisis came a letter from Jean MacDonald, with an invitation to visit her at her home. It so happened that the MacDonald farm and that owned by Breckenridge adjoined, and Heloise gladly availed herself of the invitation, and hastily making

her preparations, she took the war-path, figuratively, and the "Short-Line" train, literally, for the blue-grass regions.

Jean was waiting and delighted to see her. She carefully bundled her into a phaeton, leaving the charge of the baggage to her servant.

A drive of about four miles brought them to a large open gate, whose huge stone posts and wide entrance seemed replete with hospitality. Through this gate and into a grove of venerable oak and elm trees, the tortuous drive wound picturesquely up to an old-fashioned house, some quarter of a mile back from the "pike."

The house was of that modified classic style of architecture, formerly so popular in the South, with huge corrugated wooden pillars, once a clever imitation of marble, but now stained and blistered by many suns and weather-beaten withal. It was a roomy, breezy, delightfully hospitable old place, and into this spacious abode Heloise was ushered, up the broad oak stairs and into her own chamber, arranged on the same generous plan. Her toilet made, she repaired to the "reception room" where she met Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald; the latter, a buxum, round-cheeked, good-natured Irish woman, whose nationality was perceptible in "the soft twang in the turn of her tongue," scarcely noticeable, but adding a ripe and mellow charm to the tones of her voice.

In a little while they were at supper and enjoying a feast of Kentucky fried-chicken and "pone," corn-bread, with a fresh buttermilk accompaniment that would have delighted an epicure.

"I have invited a couple of gentlemen to call this evening," said Jean.

"Ah, that will be pleasant. Do I know them?"

"I don't know. Charlie Duncan is one and Frank Manly the other. Do you know either of them?"

"I have met Mr. Manly," answered Heloise, concealing the wild beating of her heart under an indifferent air.

"Oh, have you? Don't you think he is splendid? He is a new-comer here, and all the girls are pulling caps for him. But, somehow, he seems shy—well, not shy, either, but as if he did not believe anything they say. Well, of course he is not impolite, or anything of that sort, don't you know? but—" she stopped, unable to express herself as she wished.

"Yes, I like him very much indeed. Rather too forward at times, I thought."

"Oh, how can you say so? I find him too reserved."

Heloise shot a quick penetrating glance at her friend, and a puzzled look came over her face.

They finished the meal without further comment, and soon after the grating of buggy wheels was heard on the gravel drive and Charlie Duncan entered. He was a neatly-dressed, well-meaning fellow, chiefly distinguished by having the worst crossed eyes in Kentucky, and by his tendency at all times to tease people. This was particularly annoying, for if ever a victim, worried by the untimeliness of his foolery, showed the least impatience, it was the source of most unbounded enjoyment to Duncan and insured redoubled exertions on his part.

He had been quite "smitten" with Jean; indeed

mutual friends were beginning to couple their names significantly, after the delightfully gossipy fashion of that community where the first formal announcement of the engagement is the receipt of the wedding cards.

The formal presentation over, he seated himself between the ladies, but before the conversation had fully gotten under headway, Frank Manly entered. He was not expecting to see Heloise, as his note of invitation had simply read: "A friend of mine from Louisville." He started perceptibly on recognizing her. However, he advanced promptly, shook hands politely, and, after a few conventional phrases, seated himself beside Jean and remote from her.

This procedure nettled the little coquette, and she in turn bestowed her smiles on her cross-eyed *vis-à-vis* until his brain was more confused than his vision.

Frank left first and Heloise absolutely had not had a chance to speak a dozen words to him during the course of the evening. However, as sundry horseback rides, drives, and picnics had been discussed, she was not entirely discouraged.

The horseback rides and picnics, however, developed nothing new in the situation. Frank was always polite and save that he no longer sought to avoid her, he was unchanged in his bearing. Charlie Duncan, on the contrary, was completely fascinated by her. She alternately encouraged him, in the vain hope of spurring Frank's languid affection, and vented upon him her anger and disappointment at her non-success. He never knew in what mood he should find her, or how long she would remain in

it. She had him completely wound round her finger, and made him fetch and carry and do her bidding, even to the point of absurdity. But he was not Frank, and she raged internally thereat.

And so Heloise protracted her visit day after day, far beyond the limit she had fixed. It was now December, and the cold weather was coming on. She must go home soon; but not before she had made one desperate effort to regain her lover. Regain him she must and would.

CHAPTER IX.

THE holiday season was approaching, the days shortening and colder weather making itself felt. The hotels throughout Florida were beginning to fill with pleasure-seekers. Among the arrivals was Natalie, who immediately telegraphed Mrs. Dulany, notifying her and urging her to join her at once.

Margie Dulany handed the telegram to her husband at breakfast next morning.

"When do you want to go?" he asked.

"At once."

"Very well, I will secure tickets and berths for tomorrow. Can you be ready?"

"Yes."

"All right. I will arrange things for you, so that you will have no trouble."

There was an unusual ring in his tone that she was too preoccupied to notice.

He did secure the tickets and berths as he promised, checked her trunk and facilitated her departure by every means in his power, and watched the train pull slowly out, with a smile on his lips, that would have puzzled the most skilled physiognomist. Turning, he entered the carriage and was driven to a handsome brown-stone residence on Fourth Avenue.

"Mr. or Mrs. Mayhew in?" he asked of the sable servitor.

"The 'fessor 's in de lab'tory. De Madmae has not yet returned from her social obligations," answered the pompous negro.

"All right; I'll go in and see him," he answered, a fleeting shade of annoyance crossing his florid face.

Tarleton Mayhew, almost universally called "the professor" by his acquaintances, looked up, and greeted him with a pleasant smile.

"Hillo Peyton! Don't come in. I am investigating a new poison and don't know just what effect the vapor may have."

"And yet you risk it?"

"h, poisons are my hobby, you know, and a true scientist must take his risks for the sake of mankind."

"I don't quite see what good a new poison is going to do mankind. However, I have no desire to risk my precious carcass to benefit mankind, so I'll wait in the library."

The professor did not reply, having become absorbed in watching his re-action.

He was a tall, spare, delicate-looking man, with narrow shoulders, slightly stooped, a bony head, with massive forehead, deep-sunken, far-away eyes and an abstracted air. His face, however, indicated great tenacity of purpose, which a natural reticence made appear rather sullen. His was a sensitive and much misunderstood nature. Of ancient lineage and considerable wealth, he had indulged his *penchant* for scientific research all his life. Some four years before, he had been attracted by the merry effervescence of Norah McQuade and after a brief, shy court-

ship had married her. He was too "good a catch" for her to refuse him; but he slowly awakened to the fact that she was totally unsuited to him. Her effervescence was simply frivolity. She had no conception of the depths of his nature, nor ability to appreciate them. She had married for money and position; on realizing which fact he had retired yet more deeply into his beloved science, and given her full scope to enjoy herself in her own way.

Eagerly she availed herself of the opportunity and soon was a shining light in the social world. He himself seldom ventured there where he was commonly known as "Mrs. Mayhew's husband," though he could write a dozen letters after his name if he chose, and was corresponding member of nearly every scientific society of note in the old world.

One visitor alone was congenial to both husband and wife. Peyton Dulany ran in and out of the house at all hours, and behaved altogether like one of the family. His cheerful off-hand manner was very pleasing to the professor, and Mrs. Mayhew found him quite ready for a flirtation at all times.

"I have to deliver a lecture to-night, Peyton; won't you stay to dinner and keep Norah company until my return?" Mayhew said to him, half an hour after his entrance.

"Indeed I will, with great pleasure," he answered heartily.

Dulany lighted a cigar, and the professor smoked a quaint meerschaum that had been sent him from Germany, and they chatted over their tobacco until dinner was announced.

After dinner, the professor donned his overcoat, kissed his wife good-bye and left.

Scarcely had the door closed, when the attitude of the two he had just left together, underwent a striking change. Norah Mayhew arose, unlocked a door in the side-board, took out a cut-glass decanter and some cigarettes, poured out two glasses of brandy, gave Peyton Dulany one and took the other herself. Lighting one of the cigarettes, she perched herself on the arm of the chair in which he was comfortably stretched, sipped her brandy and smoked in a perfectly self-possessed manner.

"I say, Norah," he said at last, "I am tired of this. Let's make a bolt of it."

The liquor glass stopped half-way to her lips.

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"I mean just this; I am tired of this double life. You say you love me. You have given me every proof I have ever asked of you. Now I am going to ask the greatest proof of all. I am going to ask you to go away with me—yes, elope with me. We may as well speak plainly. You know how unhappily mated I am. I know how unappreciated you are. Come with me to a foreign country, where, under a new name and new conditions, we can begin life over again."

He passed his arm around her and drew her down upon his breast raining passionate kisses upon her lips and eyes.

Her blonde face became suffused, her very eyes were bloodshot.

"Go with you?" she whispered, hoarsely; "I'd go to perdition with you, if you asked me."

"When?"

"When you will."

"To-morrow?"

"This very night, if you say so."

"No, but to-morrow. Make some excuse to account for your being absent all day, so as to give us twenty-four hours start. Be prepared and meet me at the station at eleven o'clock."

"I will not fail. What must I bring?"

"All your jewels and as little else as possible."

"I will do just as you say. Give me one kiss more, and I will go and bathe my face, for *he* will be back presently."

There was a marked emphasis on the word "*he*," full of concentrated contempt, even hatred.

She left him, and he sat with a cynical, half sneer on his countenance, pulling away at his cigar and sipping his brandy, until she returned.

"I will go now," he said. "Tell him I remembered an engagement or something. I intend to say I am going to Florida to join my wife. You might mention that, and give necessary preparation as an excuse. Remember, eleven o'clock! You will not fail me?"

"If I am alive I will be at the station at the appointed time to-morrow."

"Till then, *au revoir*—our last parting," he whispered, as he kissed her passionately.

He left her, and still with that curious, cynical half sneer, sauntered leisurely around to the club.

There he met Captain Breckenridge, whom he took a little to one side and said :

“I say, Wick, I sent my wife to Florida to-day, and find quite unexpectedly that I must follow her to-night—some papers she forgot to sign. How much money have you with you?”

“Oh, I don’t know ; a little over five hundred dollars, I think.”

“That’s lucky. Cash a check for five hundred for me, will you? It will save me no end of bother.”

“Only too happy to be of service.”

The money was paid, and a check on a prominent bank given in exchange, and they sat over a glass of wine and chatted on indifferent subjects.

The captain shortly left, but Dulany remained, and it was afterwards remembered that he had private interviews with several other members of the club, all of which ended in an exchange of paper for cash.

It was forty-eight hours later before the whole truth became known. Peyton Dulany, reputed to be one of the most successful of distillers, had duplicated, and in some instances, triplicated warehouse receipts for whisky that he held stored in bonded warehouses, to the extent of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and although the greater part of it had been lost in Wall-street, his operations for the last few days had been much bolder, and he had secured a heavy sum in cash.

Before the public had time to recover from this heavy shock, they were thunderstruck with the information that Norah Mayhew had accompanied him

in his flight to Canada. The couple were seen and recognized in Buffalo, on their way thither, by a commercial traveler who knew them both very well by sight, but who at that time had no suspicion of the truth.

Still further excitement was occasioned by the news of Tarleton Mayhew's disappearance. He had at first refused to believe that either his wife or friend could be false; but before such proof as was brought, even his confiding nature could no longer doubt.

He became suddenly very pale and quiet. He sat for a long time in his laboratory, with his head resting upon his hands. Suddenly he arose, hastily threw a few articles into a traveling bag, drew a large sum from the bank, and was gone, no one knew whither.

CHAPTER X.

HELOISE had not yet solved the problem she had set herself.

Many attempts at being left alone with Frank had failed, and in humbleness of spirit, new to her, she was meditating the advisability of asking an interview, when an unexpected auxiliary came to her aid.

Charlie Duncan had been rather cavalierly treated that day, and into his practical-joke-loving head came the idea of teasing Frank and Jean, and getting even with Heloise, by separating the two first and leaving the latter with a man whom he firmly believed she hated.

To this end, as the four were seated on some rudely constructed benches in a beech grove, some distance from the house, he made an excuse for taking Jean home, "for a moment," as he said. He could not refrain from contorting his twisted eyes into an expression that he fondly imagined was significant of mischievous triumph, as, looking over Jean's shoulder, he caught Heloise's eye. She understood him well enough to know that he meant to keep Jean as long as he could, and saw that her opportunity had at last come, and come as she wished it, without her own interference.

For some time they sat in silence, Frank a little

embarrassed, she nerving herself to the occasion and reflecting as to the best mode of attack.

"Mr. Manly," she said, suddenly, "why do you hate me?"

"I hate you! I assure you I have no such feeling."

"Why, then, do you avoid me?"

"Miss Churchill, if I have in any way been rude to you, I sincerely beg your pardon. It was unintentional I assure you."

"Oh! It is not that. You have never done one thing I could find fault with; but you avoid me."

"I beg to——"

"Yes, I know. But you are the hardest man I ever knew. Do you expect others to judge you as harshly as you do them?"

"I declare to you that I don't understand you."

"Well, it's a difficult thing for me to do, but there is something I must say to you. I am not accustomed to feeling myself despised, and I must put myself right in your eyes, even though I go beyond the limits usually proscribed by the *convenances*."

"But, Miss Churchill——"

"Please do not interrupt me," she went on, speaking nervously and rapidly. "You have never had any respect for me since the night I pinned that flower on John Sound's coat."

"It did seem inconsistent with a certain speech made some days previous on the race stand."

"Of course it did and was. The action was the impulse of the moment, and was done in a spirit of mischief. Yet you have passed judgment, and condemned me without judge or jury. You stalk along

on your pharisaical way, without one trace of leniency or charity for human weakness and frailty in your heart. And more than that, you take occasion in your cold, Yankee way to make me feel how utterly and entirely you despise me. Do you think I have no feelings, that you so persistently humiliate me?"

"Miss Heloise! Do not, I beg of you, say more. Much that you have said comes from your imagination. The little that is just, I most sincerely deprecate. I never dreamed——"

"Never dreamed that I had any depth of feeling, any heart, or was anything but a soulless butterfly, a blasé woman of the world; in other words, a professional flirt."

Now this was pretty nearly what Frank had thought for the last three months; but by a curious change of sentiment, it was just what he would not have her know he thought for the world.

"My dear Miss Heloise!" he answered, capitalizing each word, as it were. "How can I convince you of your mistake? That I did somewhat misjudge you, I honestly confess, and that I was, as you most truthfully say, pharisaical and priggish, I also acknowledge. But that I entertained such an opinion as that, I beg you not for a moment to believe. Your noble womanly courage in speaking to me on the subject as you have, has of itself convinced me of the error of my hasty judgment. But that was not so harsh as you imagined. I have not avoided you; but as you seemed quite well occupied with our Lexington friend, I did not disturb you."

"Oh, Charlie Duncan! It's right funny, is it not?"

"What is right funny?"

"The game those two are playing."

"Which two?"

"Why, don't you know?"

"I have not one idea of what you are trying to convey."

"Really?"

"Really!"

"Why, I thought you were understanding and helping along, as I was. Why, Charlie Duncan and Jean MacDonald were engaged all last summer and had a tiff, broke off the engagement, and all that; but did not quit recognizing each other. Since then they have been playing at cross purposes, and trying to make each other jealous. Why, it's more fun than anything I have seen for many a day. The best part of the fun is that they both love each other, but are obstinate and won't yield. I guess Charlie has had enough of it, however, for he made the silliest excuse to get her to the house, and they have been gone twice as long as there was any occasion for already."

Frank remembered that he had heard the rumor frequently, and their prolonged stay was convincing of itself.

"Well, I declare, I am stupid," he confessed, as these reflections came to him. "I suppose they have 'made up' now."

"Yes; they have been gone long enough to straighten matters, I dare say."

"Well, I am comfortable enough here, so let us give them all the time they want."

This speech delighted Heloise beyond measure. She exerted herself to please, and allowed her bright wit and vivid imagination full play, charming him as she alone could charm. The sense of his former harshness in judgment was fresh on him, and he lent himself to her words in a manner which brought out her best qualities. It soon ceased to be an effort, and when, some time after, Jean and Duncan returned, it was to find them in high spirits, laughing gleefully and exchanging badinage in a way that caused both the new-comers to open their eyes.

There was no exchange of partners for the remainder of the day, Frank feeling obliged to leave the re-united lovers, as he believed Jean and Duncan to be, as much to themselves as possible, and Heloise naturally delighted to keep him.

Several callers dropped in that night and it was late before the girls went to their rooms. Jean stopped in Heloise's apartment to indulge in that greatest of luxuries to the feminine nature, taking down their back hair and having a good talk.

Heloise was in the highest spirits, playing the maddest pranks and bewildering her young hostess with her overflowing humor and nonsense.

"What makes you so hilarious to-night, Heloise?" asked Jean at last.

"Oh; the best of reasons! I am wildly happy."

"Why, what has made you so?"

"Oh; I have got my sweetheart back. I thought I had lost him, but it's all right now."

"Why, I did not see any mail arrive. Did you

get a letter? Tell me all about it," in a flutter of feminine sympathy.

"Letter? No it's Frank—Mr. Manly, I mean."

"Why, Heloise, I thought you barely knew him."

"Oh, that's part of the whole wretched business. We were almost engaged down in Louisville, this fall, and went to the Cave in the same party. Everything was just going lovely when he took me to task about old John Sound; as if anybody could be in love with dear old Major Sound! I was huffy and resented the tone he assumed. He became jealous and wanted to run things his way and—well, the long and short of it is we had a quarrel. He did not expect to see me here, when he came in the first night. Did you not see how embarrassed he was? Well, we have been playing at cross-purposes ever since I have been here. I flirted with Charlie Duncan, and he with you, each trying to make the other feel bad, don't you know? and both succeeding. He owned up to-day; said he had no right to talk as he had, begged my pardon and promised to be awfully good for the future. And I—oh, Jean! I am just as happy as I can be; for I do like him more than any man I ever knew, and I am not going to make him jealous any more. I just hate Charlie Duncan now, and do hope he well keep away from here, because Frank is so peculiar. Oh, Jean; if Charlie Duncan keeps coming here, you talk to him, won't you, dear? I came too close to losing Frank to risk it again."

She had kept up this running fire of words, watching Jean from the corner of her eye meanwhile. She

saw her turn pale and gasp a little, then gradually resume her self-command. It was then that she put the question suddenly and poor Jean could only murmur her consent.

The Scotch lassie sympathized with and congratulated Heloise in her gentle, womanly way, and soon after declared herself sleepy and wearily made her way to her own room, but not to sleep. Long, long she sat running her hands idly through her glorious hair, now hanging like a garment around her, and frequent and deep were her sighs, and finally when she did seek her couch, it was but to moisten her pillow with gentle tears.

Left to herself, Heloise Churchill bounded to her feet, her petite figure drawn to its full height, her great dark eyes burning with a full blaze of triumph, and looked at her image in the large mirror for a long time. Suddenly she swept a low, graceful, exaggeratedly profound courtesy to her reflected self and in a tone in which triumph and irony struggled for the supremacy, she addressed it.

“Upon my word, my dear Miss Churchill, you are the most unhesitating, most imaginative, and altogether the most unscrupulous liar I ever had the pleasure of meeting. Accept my heartiest congratulations and profound assurances of esteem. Bright visions hover over your innocent pillow, and may your dreams be undisturbed by the deceptions of this heartless world. Sweet, innocent, truthful, artless maiden, good-night.”

And she turned down the light, whisked into bed, and was soon in profound slumber.

CHAPTER XI.

WINTER in Florida. How different from the higher latitudes ! No ice, no snow, no blizzards, no frost-bitten fingers and noses, no plumber's bills, nor other seasonable evils.

The placid sluggish rivers, the rank overhanging vegetation, the vivid coloring of the wild flowers, the twittering of many birds of brilliant hue, the clearness of the deep blue sky overhead, and the heaviness of the perfumed air, as well as the higher temperature, all suggest a very different season.

Upon the balcony of the principal hotel of Jacksonville, sat a group of three persons, Mrs. Dulany, Natalie, and Ransom Randolph.

The meeting with the latter had been really accidental. He had long desired to see something of the tropical portion of his country ; an unexpected opportunity had presented itself and he availed himself of it. Chance, which so often decides the most important events of our lives, had thrown them together again.

Neither he nor Margie Dulany, had ever referred to the past, but had acted in the most natural manner possible. In fact both were afraid of the subject, and as Natalie was far from suspecting the truth, they had kept her with them always, a guardian angel, so to speak, saving them from embarrassing memories.

"I want to see my mail!" exclaimed Natalie, breaking the silence that had fallen upon them. "Just think! we haven't heard from the outside world for three whole days."

"Well, I have heard of people being all the world to others, but 'outside world' strikes me as a new way to put it. He is the outside world to you, is he?"

"That is not even worthy of an answer," she replied, blushing however.

But even as she spoke the mail was brought, and Natalie found several letters which she took to her room, to be gone, as Mrs. Dulany well knew, for several hours.

"Let us take our letters and go down to the boat-house and read them. It is more retired and entirely *en regle*," suggested Randolph.

"Very well."

They took their packages and walked down to the boat-house, where they found a cosy nook and proceeded to open their letters. Randolph finished his first and seeing that she was busy with some feminine correspondent, unfolded his paper and began to read.

Suddenly an oath burst from his lips, so deep, so terrible, that his companion turned and gazed at him in vague alarm.

His appearance frightened her. He had turned so pale as to be almost livid. His heavy brows met in a frown of tremendous import, and his glaring eyes seemed glued to the paper.

"What is it?" she asked, extending her hand to take the paper. He caught it almost violently.

"Have you no news of importance in your batch of letters?" he asked, keeping his self-command only by a supreme effort.

"No," she answered, hesitating and looking at him doubtfully, then running hastily over her correspondence, "Yet, stop! Here is a telegram I had overlooked." She opened and read it, appeared puzzled, and read it again.

"I don't understand this at all," she said finally. He took it and read:

"Mrs. Dulany, Jacksonville."

"Matters worse than at first thought. You can do no good by returning. Better spend the winter south. Everything you could do, will be done for you.

(Signed) WICKLYFFE BRECKENRIDGE."

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed. "What has happened? Why do you look at me like that? What is it? You don't know how you frighten me."

"Margie,"—his voice sounded strange and sepulchral—"summon all your courage, my darling, for I have something to tell you that will tax it to the utmost. God knows I would spare you and shield you from this if I could; but since you must know it, it is best you should learn it in the presence of one in whose sympathy and enduring love you can have confidence."

"What can you mean?"

"We are unobserved and you need all your strength. You will understand directly. Do not resist now." And he placed his arm tenderly around

her and held her in a firm, half embrace, which she was too bewildered and too anxious to resent.

"Tell me," she murmured. "Put me out of this suspense. Never mind about breaking it to me; let me know the worst now."

"Perhaps it is best. Your husband has suddenly left Louisville."

"Well, well, what of that?"

"He did not go alone."

"Eloped with a woman? A fitting end to his many infidelities. Who was she?"

"Norah Mayhew. But the worst has not yet been told."

"Worse! what could be worse? My God! you don't mean he is a thief?" The last words were whispered in the intensity of her emotion.

"The term is a little different—defaulter is the correct one. He has embezzled nearly half a million dollars."

"Great heaven! Disgraced! disgraced!" she cried wildly. "What shall I do? Where can I hide my head? How can I ever look my child in the face again? Oh! I shall go mad with the shame of it!"

All this and much more was sobbed out hysterically, as she buried her face on Randolph's shoulder, her slender frame shaken by tumultuous emotions.

He said nothing, made no effort to check the torrent of her words, or stay the violence of her grief, well knowing that such hysterical outburst would afford relief to her overcharged soul. He merely passed his hand caressingly along her glossy hair and murmured soothingly: "Poor little girl! Poor

little girl!" with the tender, protecting gesture one would use to a distressed child.

By-and-by, in the very strength of its outburst, her grief exhausted itself. Her sobs grew fainter, her moans less frequent, and she became calm enough to converse; but the rigid, trembling hands and occasional convulsive breathing, showed how violent the storm had been, how tense the nervous system was.

And then, tenderly, soothingly, he began to offer such little consolation as he had to give, petting and caressing her the while, with a wealth of sympathy that made itself felt more deeply than the most eloquent of words.

At last she raised her agitated face to his and asked:

"What shall I do?"

It was the same question she had moaned out in her agony; but it was put in a different tone now, and one which called for an answer.

"I judge Wick Breckenridge has answered that question for you."

"Oh! in the telegram. I had forgotten all about it. It seems ten years since I first opened that telegram."

"Poor little woman! But he advised you to remain here for the winter, and I am inclined to think his judgment correct. Is—is there any financial difficulty in the way of your following his advice?"

"Oh! no. That part of my money which,"—she hesitated for a word, and finally emphasized the one she did find with an accent of keen contempt—"he

could reach, he spent long ago. My father, who knew him better than he imagined, left the bulk of my fortune in entail for my child, with ample provision for my maintenance, and all under the guardianship of a trust company; so I know he did not get any of that."

"Well, that is consoling anyway. Can you arrange to remain here?"

"Perfectly! in fact I had already done so."

"That's right," his tone becoming quite cheerful. "We have been up the Oklawaha, now we must 'do' Fernandina and the Eastern shore. Oh, we'll find enough to keep ourselves going, never fear!"

She understood his motives in trying to cheer her, and appreciated them; she even pretended to fall in with them, and they sat quite a little while discussing their plans for the next two months; for it had been long before settled that they were to reach New Orleans some ten days before the Mardi Gras festivities.

He had been holding her in a half embrace throughout the interview, which fact had entirely escaped the attention of either. All the better element in the Virginian's nature had been brought out by this scene. He really loved the woman with a passion that sometimes amounted almost to madness. But now in her suffering and the disgrace cast upon her by another's sin, she appealed to him in a way that had no trace of passion in it.

She on her side had felt the sheltering tenderness of his great love, had needed the protecting influence of his greater strength, and had clung to him instinctively in the hour of her mortal agony.

But both were beginning to become conscious now, as the first shock of the news began to wear away and the consequent emotions to subside, in a measure, of the unconventionality of their attitude, and both began to feel slightly embarrassed thereat. Just as he was meditating how he could withdraw his arm without calling her attention to the fact that it had been there, a military band which had been attending an excursion on the river and which had just disembarked not far from the boat house, struck up with a crash that startled them like a clap of thunder. The band moved off, marching down the street; but their faces paled and flushed as their eyes met, for the band was playing "*Mon Rêve*."

Their eyes held each other with a power stronger than the will of either. For the second time in their lives the strains of that waltz had entered into their souls, and this time it came when torn by contending emotions and with nervous systems too highly wrought, it found them unable to resist the subtle influence. Gradually a different look came into their eyes, a different color to their cheeks, a different expression to their faces. And as the second theme of the air was reached and from the receding music came the long wild wail of the cornet, his arm tightened around her, his lips met hers in a clinging, soulful kiss that caused their senses to reel in ecstasy. Her sorely tried heart could no longer offer resistance. Flinging both her supple arms about his neck, she threw herself upon his breast and whispered:

"Oh, Ransom, my darling, my heart is breaking. I am homesick for a little love. Take me where you

will, do with me as you will, only love me a little ; for, heart, body, and soul I give myself to you."

And the tropic sun setting in gorgeous splendor over the placid waters of the St. John, threw his last rays over the two as they sat locked in each other's arms, their souls floating off into mystic realms, borne on the now faint melody of that never-to-be-forgotten waltz.

CHAPTER XII.

It was near midnight in a small Canadian town, not far from the United States border. The snow was falling in large fleecy flakes and it was intensely, bitterly cold. The town was very still, for the foot fall of the belated traveler was muffled by the soft cushion of the snow. There were few such travelers, however, for few cared to brave the rigors of such a night.

In a cottage on one of the side streets, a bright light gleamed from one of the windows, casting its warm flood far out into the desolate night. In the room from which the light streamed, sat a woman reading, or trying to read, a French novel, though from her frequent shifting of her position and glances at the clock on the mantel, it was evident she was not deeply interested. She was dressed in what had once been an elegant blue silk wrapper; but it now showed signs of careless wear, and was drawn around her with a reckless disregard both of the appearance of the wearer and of consequence to the garment. Her yellow, almost white hair was pushed hastily back from a brow on which premature wrinkles had begun to appear, and her face bore traces of recent suffering as well as recent dissipation. Of the latter, indeed, there was sufficient evidence, in the charred ends of a number of cigarettes upon the carpet and the glass of brandy on the table.

She wearily laid the book down and arose to shake

the anthracite stove in the room and mix herself a fresh glass of spirits.

"Past twelve," she muttered. "Every night he stays later, and yet I dare not complain. He manifestly grows more tired of me every day, and when he casts me off, what will become of me? Where could I go? Oh, miserable, blind, idiotic fool that I was to leave home and luxury for the sake of such a man! I thought I hated Tarleton Mayhew, but that was before I knew what real depth of feeling is! I hate this brutal ruffian, whose real nature I learned too late; and yet I dare not let him suspect, for I hold him only through his vanity at my supposed infatuation! Infatuation! That's the word! That's what I had for him when I left my poor half-witted husband who was all goodness to me. What a fool I was! What a fool I was!" and she paced the floor in the intensity of her feeling.

Suddenly she stopped; an expression of loathing came over her face, which she quickly suppressed as the door swung open and a man, muffled to his eyes, stalked in. He submitted to, rather than returned her kiss of welcome, and allowed her to remove his many wraps without comment.

"Get me my slippers and mix me a hot brandy punch," he commanded, rather than requested.

She obeyed in silence, stooping down to unlace his shoes, and removing the snow from the tops above the point where the overshoes protected them.

He sat down in moody silence, sipping his spirits.

"Why the devil don't you fill me a pipe?" he growled.

"Why don't you ask for what you want?" she snapped back, as she filled and lighted the pipe for him.

He took it from her with a grunt which might have been thanks, or might have been an inarticulate curse.

"Any news?" she asked at last.

"No! Got a devil of a roasting at poker to-night. Caught me for a cool 'thou.'"

"Your luck seems uniformly bad. Aren't you getting through with your money rather rapidly?"

"Yes, I am. Must do something in this infernal hole. No amusement, no society, nobody to talk to."

"Thank you."

"Don't mention it," he answered, sardonically. "By the way, did you get a new house-boy?"

"Yes, a real jewel. Best servant I have seen since I reached this miserable country. Got him on my own terms too."

"Well, I'm glad there's some good news. Now go to bed. I want to finish my pipe."

"Did you renew the lease on this house for another three months?"

A faint color came to his cheek, but he answered unhesitatingly:

"Yes, and paid in advance as before. We are snug enough here I think."

Her face cleared perceptibly.

"That will keep us through the winter," she said, in a more cheerful tone; "no danger of freezing to death, anyway. Fancy being turned out such a night

as this! Ugh! it's enough to make one shiver to think of it."

"Oh, go to bed!" he growled.

"All right. I'll have a drink first. Stop, I'll have a toast with it. Here's to our loved and left," and tossing off the liquor with a hardened laugh, she left the room.

"I am glad she's gone. She is getting too keen with her questions. Well, this is the last night she will have the chance to worry me. It does seem hard to leave her on the last day of the quarter; and old Riley, the landlord, told me he had rented the house to a stranger. Well, Norah and Riley can arrange it to suit themselves. I'll stay here and get a couple of hours of rest, and then take the four o'clock morning express for Ottawa. I can't stand this life any longer; I would just as lief be in jail."

He arose, arranged the fire, smiled grimly as he threw on the last piece of fuel in the house, wound the alarm, and drawing his chair close to the stove, was soon in a deep, heavy sleep.

He slept too heavily to hear the soft turning of the knob and the almost imperceptible noise of the opening door, as a dark form crept cautiously into the room. On seeing the sleeper, it appeared somewhat disconcerted, and went out as quietly as it had entered, and the house was as silent as before.

Something like twenty minutes after the door again opened, and the dark form re-entered, followed by a taller and more slender figure. Softly they advanced to the side of the sleeper, who, exhausted by the mental and physical strain of the day, was now

snoring heavily. The taller of the two drew a small phial from his pocket and pulled the cork with his teeth. He saturated a sponge, which he held in his left hand, with the contents of the bottle, and waved it gently under the nose of the sleeper. His breathing became heavier and deeper, a greater lassitude relaxed the extended limbs, and soon he gave evidence of being entirely under the influence of the drug.

Deftly the two silent figures bound the arms and legs of their helpless victim. Then they left him lying upon the floor, and mounting noiselessly to the room above, where the woman slept in a half-drunken stupor, drugged and bound her also.

They lifted their unconscious burdens and deposited them one in each of two sleighs, which were waiting without the door, and which were instantly driven in opposite directions. And in this life those two never again saw each other.

The next morning, when Norah Mayhew awoke, it was in a strange bedroom. Nothing about her was familiar; she rubbed her eyes, and resorting to that most familiar of expedients, she pinched her own flesh to convince herself that she was not dreaming. But, no; she was in a large, plainly furnished room, through the barred windows of which the sun was streaming. Nothing about the premises resembled anything she had ever seen before.

She arose and looked out the window. All around was a wide stretch of country, covered with snow; a few bare trees gave additional desolation to the landscape; but nowhere could she discover traces of

habitation. She looked for her clothing, but could find no traces of the garments she had last worn. Instead, she found some very plain black dresses and neat, but inexpensive, underwear.

A folded piece of paper next attracted her attention; she discovered that it was addressed to "Norah." Opening, she read:

"Put on the clothes which have been provided for you; and when you are ready to receive a visitor, ring the bell. You need fear no personal violence, and will shortly be released."

There was no signature, and the handwriting was unfamiliar.

Very much puzzled and very much frightened, she slowly dressed herself as directed, and when she thought herself sufficiently nerved for the interview, she pulled an old-fashioned bell-cord which was hanging on the wall.

A deliberate step could be heard mounting the bare stairs and approaching along the bare floor of the outer hall. A key was placed in the large old-fashioned lock, and with a heavy sound of the shooting bolts, the massive door was flung open and a tall figure entered.

"My God, my husband!" burst from her startled lips, as she shrank, terror-stricken, back into her chair.

He carefully closed and locked the door, and came slowly toward her.

"Yes, I am that much-injured man."

"Oh, Tarleton, have mercy! I have wronged you, cruelly wronged you, but my sin has brought its

punishment. My life has been a hell on earth with that man. I dared not write you; I dared not hope for pardon; but my repentance has been deep, my suffering unbearable. Oh, if you only knew!"

She was cowering on the floor now, clasping his knees in an agony of supplication.

At the first touch of her arms a great shiver shook his slender frame, but neither his countenance nor voice betrayed any emotion, as he answered:

"I know more than you think; more even than you know! Step by step I have tracked you through your wanderings. For weeks I have known your whereabouts and watched your every movement. Your lives have been in my hands all that time; but I was secure in my vengeance, and could afford to wait for the proper time. It has come."

"What would you do? Oh, Tarleton, my husband, you would not murder me?"

"Never dare to use that phrase to me again!" he thundered. "No; I will not harm your wretched body. Be silent and listen. I have some things I want to say to you"—and as she crouched back appalled at his vehemence, he continued more mildly—"You said 'if I only knew.' I do know. I know that your wretched paramour had made every preparation to abandon you; that the lease on your house terminated last night and was not renewed; that the scoundrel had a ticket for Ottawa in his pocket, and had engaged a sleigh to take him to the four o'clock train this morning; that he meant to leave you in a strange country without a dollar, without shelter, without hope."

The woman uttered a suppressed cry: "I half suspected it! What shall I do?"

"Listen and I will tell you. I have reasons of my own for having you remain here for three days. At the end of that time an agent of mine will conduct you to El Paso, Texas. There you will find a small cottage, plainly furnished. The rent is paid, and will be paid so long as you live in it. The address of another agent will be furnished you, on whom you will call every day and receive an amount sufficient to enable you to live plainly, but comfortably. You must go every day, or furnish convincing proof of your physical inability to do so. Should you fail to do this, your income will be stopped forever. If you have really repented, you will atone for your misdeeds by a blameless life. If not, a paid agent will watch your every movement and report to me. This will be your only protection against absolute penury. I offer you a home; but only so long as you deserve it. Wait here three days. If you are quiet, every attention will be paid your wants; if not, coercion will be used, if necessary. Me, you will never see again."

And putting her gently, but coldly away from him, he passed out of her sight.

The door closed behind him with a clang, the heavy bolt shot to its place, and Norah Mayhew was left alone with her thoughts.

CHAPTER XIII.

PEYTON DULANY awoke much earlier than his guilty companion, that morning. He found himself dressed as he had been when he went to sleep on the preceding night and feeling strangely cramped and uncomfortable. In endeavoring to relieve his limbs by changing his position, he made a discovery that sent every drop of his blood from his heart—he was manacled hand and foot!

At first he, too, thought he was suffering from some horrible nightmare; but the pain caused by the handcuffs, when he tried to free himself, soon convinced him of his error. He looked around him. It was early dawn. The faint light, struggling between the heavy shutters, showed him a room destitute of furniture, save a single chair and a pitcher of water on the mantle shelf. The floor was as bare of carpet as the walls of paper. A single window protected with stout wooden shutters and one door were the only openings. He found himself chained to a strong staple, in the wall, and so firmly fastened as to defy his utmost effort to free himself.

For some time he struggled and strove in every way his ingenuity could suggest, but without avail. Then he tried to attract attention, or to gain some information as to his whereabouts by calling for as-

sistance. In vain did he shout himself hoarse; in vain did he alternately threaten and entreat. No answer was vouchsafed his appeals save the hollow reverberation of that dreary room.

Many weary hours passed thus. The sun was high in the heavens, when at last, abandoning all hopes of assistance, he sunk into a sullen and despairing silence. In addition to his other discomforts, a raging thirst began to consume him, a thirst greatly augmented by the sight of the pitcher on whose stone sides moisture was slowly forming, showing that it must contain water.

At last, when he was least expecting it, the door was flung suddenly open and a tall slender form entered.

“Sorry to have kept you waiting, Mr. Dulany,” said a voice that caused his heart to stop beating for a moment, “but I was unavoidably detained by an interview with a charming lady. By the way, I believe you know her. She *was* my wife”—and the heavy wraps and overhanging cap were removed and Peyton Dulany’s horror-stricken eyes fell upon the pale, sarcastic countenance of the one man in all the world he had most to fear, Tarleton Mayhew.

Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Dulany?” The tones were even and ironical to such a point as to sound almost playful.

“I don’t know what your design on me is, but if you have one vestige of feeling left, give me a glass of water,” answered Dulany.

“Why, certainly, with a pleasure you would scarcely believe!” answered Mayhew, pouring out a

glass full to the brim, and, holding it to the lips of the prisoner, watched him as he drained the last drop in eager thirst.

“You will perhaps believe me by and by, Mr. Dulany, when I assure you that of the many drinks of different kinds, I have had the pleasure of giving you in my life, I never gave you one that offered me more genuine pleasure. Why, I have been three months hunting for you just for the happiness of handing you that innocent little glass of water. I have traced you through many disguises and all over Canada, to offer it to you and, my dear Mr. Dulany, I would have followed you to Kamchatka, if need be; yes, to hell and beyond, to have had the pleasure of presenting you with that refreshing drink.”

“Enough of this! What do you want? What do you mean to do?”

“Allow me to suggest that your tone is scarcely polite. But to relieve your mind, I will inform you that I mean to have just four hours of pleasant conversation with you and that is all. All traces of my whereabouts are already lost and my subsequent actions will be a secret to the world.”

Dulany looked at him with a lowering brow and questioning eyes. “Tarleton Mayhew,” he said, “you feel that I have injured you! So be it, I am willing to afford you the satisfaction one gentleman demands of another.

“Ah! you are brave enough to meet me now. Tut! tut! what a pity it is too late! Had I been able to find you sooner, I might have given you the opportunity of completing your wrong against me by kill-

ing me. But now I am sorry, I have made other arrangements."

"I shall not run away again, I assure you," muttered Dulany, with a poor attempt at bravado, quailing inwardly before the darkly smiling face of his enemy.

"Thanks for the assurance, but I don't think you will. There are good reasons, more satisfactory, pardon me, than your word, why you should not."

"Will you loosen these cursed chains long enough to give me a chance to meet you on equal terms?"

"Now, now, Mr. Dulany! Could I have spent these months hunting a rabid wolf, and having him securely caged, let him out again, as you put it, to give him an equal chance? Besides, how could I give you an equal chance so far as muscle and brawn are concerned? You are a pretty fair all-round athlete, a good shot, and a good fencer; whereas I never fired a pistol or handled a sword in my life. So that your equal chance would mean, no chance at all for me. But there is another point, Mr. Dulany, which you have overlooked, perhaps. In order to give you an equal chance with me, I should have to about double your brain power and as science has as yet no means of accomplishing that, I see no way of settling our differences," he smiled again, more darkly than before, "by a matching of our respective forces against each other."

"In God's name, man, what do you propose doing?"

"Oh, I mean to tell you, but you are so impatient! Not more than half an hour of the four is gone, and

you wish to hasten my climax. Have some regard for dramatic effect, can't you?"

Through Dulany's brain a horrible fear was beginning to form; vague, indefinite, but terrifying.

"Why do you refer to the four hours? What is your intention, man, fiend, devil? What do you intend doing?"

"Well, I wish to recall a little episode. You remember the last conversation I had with you? It took place during the absence of my loving wife. I warned you—not out of my house—oh, no! always charmed to see you there, but out of the laboratory. I was experimenting with a new poison, if you remember, and feared the vapors might wound your delicate nostril. You wondered what good such a discovery could do mankind. Well, as the water in that pitcher was thoroughly impregnated with it, I can inform you that in a little more than three hours mankind will be benefited by the death of the most cold-blooded, unscrupulous, heartless scoundrel that the world has ever produced. You will begin to suffer in about twenty minutes. You will be dead in three hours and ten minutes, Mr. Dulany!"

"Dead! poisoned! murdered! You have not dared to—"

"Yes, I have dared to hold the glass to your lips with my own hands, while you drank the dose I had prepared."

"Coward! murderer! Give me but one chance; free but one hand. Let me loose, I say! Assassin! Poisoner! You dare not meet me on equal ground!"

The face of Tarleton Mayhew began slowly to

change. A greenish pallor overcast it, and his eyes glared with maniacal fury. His tall, slender form erected itself to its full height; his bony, outstretched arms were raised on high, as he loosed the pent-up vials of his wrath:

“You talk to me of courage, you viper! But what created thing is vile enough to characterize you? You enter my house under guise of friendship; you abuse my hospitality; you steal my wife, and tarnish a name that never had a blot on it before; and when you tire of your plaything, you prepare to leave her an outcast and penniless, to freeze or starve in an obscure town. Ah, yes! you may well start, for I know every secret of your black soul. I have watched you for weeks—waiting, waiting, waiting; and *now*—NOW! my hour has come. Die, you miserable, cringing cur! Die, whilst I look on and enjoy your agony. Ah, ha!”—and his thin, penetrating voice was raised to a shriek of triumphant laughter. “Where is your boasted courage? Why don’t you meet your fate like a man? Why don’t you defy me now? Who is the coward? Have you no manhood—no pride? The gloss of fashion and the mould of form absolutely grovels for mercy when he knows there is none. No! for you die—die like a poisoned wolf—no, not so bravely, even, for he snaps and snarls. You die like a miserable cur, with his tail between his legs. Why, even when I kick you, you don’t move! Dog, viper, hound, will nothing arouse you?”

He spurned the stricken wretch with his foot, but

no evidence of consciousness of the crowning indignity was evoked.

And so he stood there, motionless, and gazed with the same maniacal glare lighting up his blood-shot eyes, and watched the helpless wretch grovel and moan piteously, until the moans grew fainter, and finally ceased. A few convulsive movements, a final gasp, and the soul of Peyton Dulany took its flight to the awful Unknown.

Tarleton Mayhew bent over the prostrate form, and carefully satisfied himself that it had ceased to breathe. He then removed the manacles, and once more spurning the carcass with his foot, turned on his heel and disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV.

NORAH MAYHEW spent the three days allotted to her in the rambling old farm-house, in a state of profound dejection. She readily recognized the futility of attempting resistance, and made no effort at escape. She saw but one person in all that time, a large-boned, brawny French woman, whose hard features had no trace of feminine sympathy, but who was respectful enough. She did not understand English, and her French was a patois that Norah could not comprehend. She seemed to combine in her one person the offices of cook, chambermaid, ladies-maid and jailer.

On the morning of the fourth day, the jingle of sleigh-bells was heard approaching. The sleigh shortly afterward drew up to the door, and a muffled figure that seemed familiar to the eager watcher from the window above, stepped out and came toward the house.

The murmur of conversation was audible, and then steps approached, the key turned and the door opened.

Norah, who had been in an agony of anticipation during all this time, so that every detail seemed an age, came eagerly forward to meet the new-comer; but, on perceiving him, she started back with an expression of profound surprise.

“Louis!” she exclaimed.

"Yes, madam, Louis, the French serving-man; Hans, the German hack-driver, or any other character that it suits me to assume; but really engaged in a different line of business, as this may tell you."

And he handed her a card, on which was neatly graven:

JOHN ROPER,

Private Detective.

No. — Street, N. Y.

"And you were then employed by——"

"Mr. Tarleton Mayhew, and am still in his service. He had several of us engaged, but I have been the lucky one. I tracked you to your home, secured service as your servant, and admitted my employer into the house that night—a task rendered easier by your—by Mr. Dulany's discharging all the servants the day before."

"Discharging the servants?"

"Yes; I was employed by you afterward, and purposely kept out of the way. He was determined that no one should see him leave the following morning, as he feared you might follow him."

"Oh, the scoundrel! May the curse of my ruined life rest on his soul forever. Where is he?—for of course you know."

"He is where no further vengeance can follow him."

"Dead?"

He nodded without speaking.

"Dead!" she repeated. "But where? How? By whom?—Great God! my husband!"

"Here is a paper containing the account of the

finding of his body. On reading, you will understand that of course I could know nothing about his death."

"Or, knowing, would not confess the knowledge."

The imperturbable countenance of Mr. John Roper was entirely undisturbed by this. He made no reply, but sat in silence until she had finished the high-wrought account given in the paper he had brought. It was a genuine sensation, and the enterprising reporter had, as he would have phrased it, "worked it for all it was worth." Elaborate description of the scene of the murder was followed by columns of speculation as to the motive of the crime and probable criminal.

Norah had the humiliation of reading of her relations with the dead man, accompanied by a pen-picture describing her in language suited to a flash novel—"siren," "voluptuous ensnarer," "dashing blonde." Throughout her adventure nothing had so thoroughly opened her eyes to her real position as this. She had long ceased to care for Dulany, and from the manner of her capture, as well as the stern bearing of her husband in their final interview, she had been somewhat prepared to hear of his crowning vengeance. But the familiar bandying of her name about, the fearless application to her of terms which but a few short months before a dozen chivalrous men would have sprung forward to protect her from, brought home to her, more forcibly than a hundred sermons, the enormity of her error, the utter hopelessness of ever regaining her lost prestige. And nothing could have wounded her more, for it struck

at her vital point, her vanity. She could have braved gossip, even scandal of a certain piquant sort. She was willing to shock the community by a daring action; and, indeed, was not ill-pleased to be a subject of remark. But to be treated with contemptuous familiarity by a "miserable penny-a-liner," as she mentally termed him, brought her real position home to her, and she crouched, covering her face with the paper, in an agony of mortification.

Mr. John Roper sat quietly watching her, and giving her all the time she required, motionless and expectant.

At last she raised her burning face.

"You have come—?" she said, inquiringly.

"As the agent Mr. Mayhew indicated in his last interview with you. We are to start for El Paso within two hours, provided you have consented to his terms."

"Oh, I have no alternative, for that matter; but they are liberal; better than I deserve. Will you tell him I said that when you see him?"

"I shall not see him again, but I will see that your message reaches him."

"Thank you. Is there anything else for me to do, or that you wish to say?"

"Only this: Our tickets are purchased and berths engaged for El Paso. A trunk containing suitable clothing has been checked, and the check will be given to you. The house, as you have been informed, is rented furnished. And now I must retire to 'make up' for my part; for I am somewhat known in the community, and if recognized it might

be unpleasant for you—take you for a criminal in charge, you know. Put on your wraps, for we have a long ride in the open sleigh.”

So saying, he left the room abruptly; but in an astonishingly short time a venerable white-haired, stoop-shouldered apparition entered again.

“Is my dear grand-niece ready for her journey?” he asked.

It required all her penetration to recognize in the octogenarian another of the many personalities of the versatile Mr. Roper. She assented to his question without remark, however, and together they entered the sleigh and were driven off toward the nearest railroad station.

CHAPTER XV.

ONE of our recent distinguished visitors to this country, in giving his "impressions," made the just criticism that there was too much sameness about our principal cities. "New York, Chicago, St. Louis and San Francisco," he said, "all look alike, have the same style of architecture and the same general plan. An equal distance, traversed on any other part of the globe, would take the traveler through a wide variety of country, customs and people. The United States impresses only by its vastness." This criticism is doubtless just in the main, for our country has had such a spontaneous, mushroom-like growth that its architecture is distinctly modern, whilst the great facility of inter-communication makes a homogeneous people, a great desideratum in some respects, but destructive to some of the essentials of picturesqueness.

There are, however, a few places to which this criticism would not be applicable ; the most conspicuous of which is, perhaps, New Orleans. The Crescent City, besides being one of the oldest of our settlements, presents a more varied history, having been under Spanish and French domination before joining the others under American. Her history is shown in her houses. One broad thoroughfare divides America from France. The character of the architecture, the names above the shop doors, the characteristics of the

pedestrians one meets, even the names of the streets change as one crosses to the opposite side. From the modern American city one passes into the atmosphere of a foreign town. The low, broad houses, generally dilapidated, but occasionally giving evidence of former luxury—for most of the French settlers were of the “before the war” aristocracy—the darker, more alien-looking people, and the listless air which everywhere prevails, contrast strongly with the bustling, quick, energetic existence on the other side. Should one care to pursue one’s investigation, a further walk would disclose the flat, one-story adobe buildings of the Spanish *régime*, now principally occupied by the negro population.

But there is one season when listlessness disappears from the air and bearing of the French and Creole citizens, and redoubled activity presents itself amongst the American. Great and small, old and young, wholesale and retail merchants, lawyers, doctors, brokers, idlers, gamblers, everybody old enough to speak, are thoroughly aroused and have one subject of interest in common. And that is when the season for Lenten sack-cloth and ashes approaches. For between comes Mardi Gras, the great carnival time.

For weeks before, preparations are going on. The subjects of street parade and tableaux are selected six months previous, and agents sent abroad to purchase, regardless of expense, the necessary paraphernalia. As the time draws near, increased activity is observable, and finally, during the last few days preceding Fat Tuesday, business is almost entirely sus-

pended. Every one makes himself, to a greater or less degree, one of the Committee of Entertainment, and gives up nearly his entire time to that object.

The various clubs and secret societies go into the thing in the most systematic way. Let a guest bring sufficient credentials to make his social status good, and he will be taken up and whirled along at a rate which gives him scarce time to think or breathe. It is the grand culmination of Southern hospitality.

At the time our friends visited this most charming of cities, at the height of its joviality, they were particularly fortunate. They had made acquaintances at White Sulphur who were in the charmed circle, and for ten days preceding the festivities they were recipients of invitations to dinners, Germans and balls, which kept them in a whirl of dissipation. Mrs. Dulany had made warm friends among the New Orleans coterie, and though her husband's crime was known, she was commended for her "grit" in not allowing it to drive her into solitude. Especial efforts were made that she should not feel neglected, and that nothing calculated to wound her sensitive pride should happen.

She and Natalie had engaged a suit of rooms on Carondelet street. They had the entire ground floor, which was really fitted up elegantly, and here they were soon comfortably installed.

Randolph had taken an apartment in the same house but on a higher floor; as however their suite included a handsome parlor into which their meals were brought, and as he was nearly always with them, it was very like living together. As Natalie

and the captain were constantly seeking every opportunity to be alone, many chances were afforded Margie Dulany and her lover for the continuance of an affair which had grown so irresistible as to completely sweep all other considerations aside.

When the festivities were at their height, their entire time by day as well as night was occupied. A late breakfast was scarcely finished before they adjourned to one of the clubs—which during this time were more frequented by the wives, sisters and daughters of the members than by the members themselves—where amid music and refreshments, dancing and flirting the time passed, until it was announced that the day procession was at hand; when all stepped out on the capacious platform and watched the gorgeous floats move slowly by. After this, dinner; then, usually, driving out; returning to the same or some other club to watch the “night procession. Finally they went home, dressed and attended the ball at the French Opera-house, at an hour which ordinarily they would have considered rather late for retiring. This high pressure, if one might call it so, to distinguish it from the ordinary gayety, commenced on Saturday, resumed Monday, and went out, literally in a blaze of glory, Tuesday night or rather Wednesday morning, for the festivities lasted until broad daylight.

On Sunday they went to the quaint French Cathedral and in the afternoon visited Lake Pontchartrain and the Old Spanish Fort, for they were determined to see all there was to be seen.

Tuesday evening they gathered upon the balcony

to witness the night procession. Rex, the Carnival King, had had his triumphal entry during the day and in the earlier part of the evening one of Louisiana's fairest daughters had been crowned queen, with a diadem of jewels of great intrinsic value, and now all were watching the final procession—that of the “Mystic Crewe of Comus,” the oldest of the various secret organizations.

The subject of the procession on this occasion was scenes from French history, and float after float passed, with members of the “Mystic Crewe” dressed in elaborately correct costumes and posed in descriptive tableaux illustrating incidents from the Conquest of Vercingetorix to the era of the first Napoleon. There are several of these secret societies, and as a friendly rivalry exists between them, these processions are gotten up on a scale credible only to those who have seen them.

“I declare I am all worn out!” said Natalie. “Another day would kill me. As it is, I expect to sleep for a week when I go to bed—if I ever get there”—she added plaintively, as she remembered the ball at the Opera-house, still to come.

“Perhaps you had better not go to-night,” suggested Breckenridge, innocently.

She looked at him in mute amazement.

“Not go to the ‘Mystic Crewe of Comus’ ball?”—she gave the full value to every word she uttered. “I believe I would get out of my grave to attend it—once, anyhow.”

“Oh, all right! I only suggested, you know.”

She laughed when she saw the effect her tragic manner had produced upon him.

“I know you were thinking about me and my comfort, you great boy; but of course I *have* to go.”

And they did go.

Arriving at the French Opera-house about eleven o'clock, they made their way through a dense crowd and into a proscenium box, where some friends, were awaiting them.

And from the box what a scene presented itself to their dazzled vision! Crowded literally from pit to dome with the most beautiful women in the South—for all the Southern cities, and for that matter, many Western cities, were well represented—in the richest costumes their purses could afford and their taste suggest, presenting an array so gorgeous, so brilliant, that New Orleans might well challenge the world to produce its like.

The stage had been extended some distance over the parquette seats, leaving a platform which was kept unoccupied. Soon the sound of trumpets were heard, and the curtain rolled slowly up, disclosing the “Mystic Crewe” in a tableau comprising all the figures of the night procession. An immense band of musicians marched upon the stage, the tableau dissolved itself into a procession which walked slowly forward and around the edge of the platform. It then broke ranks, each member stepped forward and selected a partner from among the expectant fair ones, presenting her at the same time with a souvenir—and danced the first quadrille. The platform was held sacred for the Crewe for that dance, and to be

“taken out” for this occasion is quite a distinguished honor.

The quadrille finished, the spectators became participators. The platform was thronged with young people of both sexes, engagements for further dances made, and in the general confusion the masked members of the organization slowly disappeared, to reappear, perhaps, in evening costume, entirely innocent of any knowledge of the previous events of the night.

Gradually the mere spectators departed, leaving only the dancers. The thinning of the crowd left many cosy little corners about the proscenium boxes and foyer. In one of these nooks Margie Dulany and Ransom Randolph were seated. Inspired by some remark she had just made, he threw his arm around her, drew her to him and kissed her passionately and repeatedly. She submitted to the caresses for a moment and then struggling, released herself.

“Oh, Ransom, how can you be so imprudent? You will ruin me if we are seen.”

He had laughingly released her and was standing near, but not touching her. Her face was flushed, and bearing a somewhat disturbed look, and his tie was disarranged. Before he could reply, a quick, firm foot-fall sounded near and Captain Breckenridge stood before them. His keen glance took in all the details of the situation; but his face was unruffled and his voice unchanged.

“Oh! here you are, you negligent chaperon! Natalie is completely danced down. She has completed the conquest of half a dozen impetuous

Southerners, and in the conservative language of your sex, declares that she is completely and entirely dead; that she knows she will not live to reach home, and that she is really very sleepy. As it is past two o'clock, I can readily believe the latter statement."

"Past two! is it possible?" said Mrs. Dulany, still confused and wondering how much the Kentuckian had seen. "Well, we must indeed be going," and she rose hastily.

"She is over there by the box we first occupied," said the captain. "Come, let us join her. By the way, Ranse, what time do you breakfast in the morning?"

"Oh, I shall take my time to-morrow! Not before eleven anyway."

"Got anything to do in the afternoon?"

"No; nothing especial. Have you?"

"Yes, I want to talk to you. Suppose I drop in on you about two?"

"All right; I should be charmed. I shall not leave the house till you come."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE next afternoon Wicklyffe Breckinridge, punctual to his appointment, found Randolph comfortably reclining on a sofa-couch, in dressing gown and slippers, reading a romance, smoking his meerschaum and looking at peace with the world.

“Hello, Wick! On time, I see. Find a rocking chair in the corner, spare pipe and tobacco on the mantel, box of cigars on the bureau, good ‘Belle of Nelson’ in the side-board and matches scattered everywhere. Make yourself at home, take a drink and excuse me from moving, for the bottom of my feet are blistered with dancing and sight-seeing.”

“All right, old man; hold the fort as you are! Shall I pour you out a little?” holding the whiskey bottle in view.

“If you will be so good. I have been wanting a drink for half an hour but was simply too lazy to take it. Oh, Wick! my son, my best beloved son! how often must I caution you against the pernicious habit of putting sugar in your whiskey? Don’t you know that the sugar does more harm than the whiskey? If ever you fill a drunkard’s grave I shall inscribe on your tombstone ‘Died from the use of glucose and white sand.’”

“Well, I have a most original reason for putting sugar in my whiskey. It tastes better.”

And he terminated the momentous discussion by handing a glass of liquor to Randolph, filling the spare pipe, pulling up the easy chair; and with a glass of grog in one hand and pipe in the other, making himself as comfortable as possible.

“Ranse,” he said, after a long pause, “What is there between you and Margie Dulany?”

The meerschaum almost fell from the nerveless hand of the Virginian, as this sudden question came like a cannon-shot at his head.

“What—what did you say?” he stammered.

“What is there between you and Margie Dulany?”

The question was repeated in clear and incisive tones, but the attitude was not in the least changed.

“What do you mean?” asked Randolph, flushing.

“I mean that there is more between you than there should be.”

Randolph sat up on his couch and looked at him with kindling wrath.

“By what right do you question me on that subject?”

“I will not answer that question until you repeat it; for I would prefer not to do so. I have a good right and the best of intentions. Again I ask, what is there between you?”

“And again I ask by what right do you catechize me on a matter which does not in the least concern you?”

“I might answer by the right of long friendship for a woman deprived now, by no fault of her own, of her natural protector. I might say by the right that every honorable man has to step in before it

is too late to save a woman's virtue—if it be not too late. But I prefer to answer simply that my *fiancée* is here under her chaperonage and I have the right to withdraw her from the charge of an objectionable woman."

"Be careful what you say, Wick Breckenridge. I know you and you know me. I will permit much from a friend, but by Heaven! I am not coward enough to sit by and hear such an aspersion cast on the woman I——"

"The woman you love! Of course you are no coward. We were together in too many hot skirmishes for me to doubt your courage. But physical courage is, after all, the cheapest of the virtues. More than a million men gave proof of its possession during our war, and you will find traces of it in the very brutes. No; you are no physical coward; but morally—there's the rub."

"I fail to understand you, Captain Breckenridge."

"Then I will make myself clearly understood. You have been in love with Margie Dulany for months, perhaps for years. Something transpired between you in Louisville; but not much, or you would not so soon have gone home. You follow her to Florida. There the news of a great mortification, a great disgrace, if you will, comes upon her, wounding her in her most sensitive point, her pride. You are near and take advantage of the prostration which the news throws her in. You ply the seducer's arts, with what success you best know; for you have been her shadow for three months and more. Last night I surprised you in almost an equivocal position. Can I allow

my *fiancée* to remain under such chaperonage? What good will your resentment of this talk do? You know in your heart I am doing just what any other man would do, and a row on such a subject would make public that which is only suspected."

"Suspected! do you mean?—"

"That such persistent attention can only bring one result eventually. Whispers are now beginning which will soon become clamorous assertions."

"Good Heaven! I did not know—I did not think—"

"That people would use their eyes, and form their own impressions? You have been living in a fool's paradise; it is time for you to wake up."

"But what must we do? What must *I* do?"

"Make the only reparation a man of honor can make to a woman he has betrayed—marry her."

"But I am a Catholic! My religion does not permit me to marry a divorcee."

"Did it permit you to wrong her? But enough of that! Your scruples will not be outraged. Peyton Dulany is dead."

"Dead! My God! How do you know?"

"A Canadian paper brings the news. Here it is!"

"There seems to be no doubt about it," remarked Randolph, as he read the entire account. "Of course the hand of Tarleton Mayhew shows through the whole matter. He has had his revenge."

"And what do you propose doing?"

Randolph shifted uneasily and hesitated.

"I—I don't know."

"Ransom Randolph, a moment ago you asked me by what right I interfered in this matter. I did not

give you the strongest right—the right of a friend of twenty years standing, who has stood shoulder to shoulder with you in danger and trouble; who helped you in your great trial, and who has watched over and loved you as a brother. You referred to your physical courage just now; but if you could allow yourself to desert the woman who has trusted you too far at this time, after having tarnished her fair name, you are worse than the veriest skulker that ever hid from the enemy's front. Don't answer me now, for you must not decide hastily; but remember that your refusal means that Natalie must know all, and that if she drops Mrs. Dulany at this time, she is hopelessly disgraced. Good-bye, old chap! Answer me to-morrow."

And more moved than he cared to show, the stalwart ex-soldier swung himself out of the room and into the street. He was walking aimlessly, but he mechanically took his way to his room at the hotel.

Arriving there he found a poorly-dressed negro, who had been awaiting him some minutes.

"Dis Cap'n Breck'ridge?" he asked.

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

"Why, Eph, he sent me. He say he want to see you, please sah, mighty bad."

"Who's Eph?"

"I dunno, sah. He say he used to b'long to you' fadder. Wu'ked in de dinin' room 'fo' de wah?"

"We did have such a servant. What sort of a man is he?"

"Old niggah, white hair; all twisted up wid rheumatiz."

"What does he want with me?"

"He said he seed you, day 'fo' yistiddy on the street and he 'lowed ef you knowed de trouble he's in, you might holp him."

"I'll do what I can to help one of our old slaves. What's his trouble?"

"I don't des 'zactly know, sah. He thought maybe you might come 'long o' me an' see him. He's hidin'."

"Hiding? What for, and from whom?"

"From de police. He cut a man, I b'lieve. He says ef he could get a lawyer he'd be out o' trouble, but he's too poo'."

"Oh, well, I guess I had better go with you and see what can be done for him. Is it far?"

"Des over in Spanish town."

"Very well, come along," said the captain.

The answers to his questions had been so ready that he had little doubt that one of his father's ex-slaves had gotten into a scrape and had turned to him as naturally as if he still had the right to expect protection. It was a longer walk than he had anticipated, taking him deep into the heart of the old Spanish settlement. At last, however, they reached an adobe building, a little dingier than the rest, with a single narrow low door entering it.

"I got ter go 'head ter let Eph know you's comin'. Might be somebody wid 'im as don't want ter be seed. When I w'istles you des come in dat do'. Shut it behin' you and walk towards de light."

The captain did not altogether relish the turn matters were taking, but he was of too adventurous a

disposition not to go on, especially as to refuse might seem cowardly. So he nodded, and the negro disappeared. In about five minutes a short whistle sounded and he entered the door as indicated, finding himself in a narrow passage-way, at one end of which a dim light gleamed fitfully.

He was making his way slowly towards this, when a heavy cloak was suddenly thrown over his head, pinioning his arms, blinding and half suffocating him. A few desperate efforts showed him that all attempts at freeing himself were useless, and he ceased to struggle, reserving his strength for future emergency. So when two pairs of nervous hands forced his arms behind his back and tied them, he was strangely quiescent.

This accomplished, he was pushed forward, still unresisting, until he heard the sound of a door closing and being barred behind him. He was thrust into a chair, and with a new turn of the ropes, his wrists were tied to the back. Not till then was the cloak withdrawn, and he saw by whom he had been captured.

The captain had been addicted to athletic sports all his life, especially enjoying club-swinging and fencing. Constant practice had aided a natural peculiarity, until he had a very muscular physical development. His long, sinewy, but quite narrow hands were attached to bony, muscular, well developed wrists, that measured more in circumference than the hand. It was a common feat with him to tie a cord around his wrist and slip it over his hand. It was for this reason that he had allowed himself to be tied without

a struggle. As he found himself with his back from his captors, he quietly set to work to release himself without his movement being suspected, glancing around meanwhile.

He found himself in a squalid, ill-furnished room, with low ceilings and stained walls. Around a heavy table four men, all negroes, of forbidding countenance, were seated. Among them, he recognized his guide and Gibson, the man who had attempted his life in Louisville. The slight form of the jockey was clothed in far coarser attire than he had worn before his disgrace; the peaked face was lined with dissipation, and the eyes bloodshot and rolling now with gratified malice.

"Got you dis time, Cap'n" he grinned. "Gwine to get squar, fore you gits away from me dis time. Ain't got no Yankee ball-player to protect you. Bottom rail's on top now, fo' suah."

"What will you take to let me out of this?" asked the captain quietly, as he, unobserved by the others, dropped the last rope from his wrist, leaving him as free as any other occupant of the room.

"Take plenty; take all we can git and dats a heap, but gwinetake som 'n' else fuss! Gwine to do dis and dis."

And the impudent jockey coolly walked across to where the prisoner was seated and deliberately slapped his face, first with one hand and then with the other.

Only a Southerner, born with fixed ideas of race superiority, could appreciate Captain Breckenridge's sensations at that moment.

For an instant he was paralyzed, blinded with

rage! Then the blood surged into his temples, everything turned red in his vision and he was practically a maniac. He leaped to his feet, seized the astonished jockey by the throat, shook him as he would have shaken a rat, and holding him suspended in the air, broke his back over the chair he had been sitting upon.

He might doubtless have taken advantage of the confusion and surprise of the others to escape, but he was beside himself. He sprang forward, seized the heavy table, and upsetting it, wrenched one of its legs off. Using the leg as a club, he made an onslaught so savage as to put the three men to flight. They soon rallied, however, drawing knives and razors, and a bloody struggle ensued.

The enormous natural strength of the Kentuckian, aided as it was by his insane anger, enabled him to cope with the three ruffians on whose ignorant minds his great size and glaring eyes began to work, until one of them cried:

“Dat mus’ be the devil! I done struck him four times wid dis knife and he done keer no more ’n if I hadn’t teched him!”

The others accepted the idea at once, and unbaring and flinging open the door, escaped into the street and disappeared in adjoining rookeries.

Exhausted from his great exertions, his clothing torn and disarranged by his struggle, bleeding from a dozen wounds, Wicklyffe Breckenridge followed them. But as he approached the last door of exit, his strength began to fail him, he staggered through it and fell into the arms of a passing policeman.

CHAPTER XVII.

HELOISE found her strategy worked to a charm. Duncan saw himself so thoroughly snubbed and put aside that he was glad enough to seek consolation in Jean's company. Indeed it was not a great while before the star of his affection for her, which had somewhat paled beside the comet of his infatuation for Heloise, began to shine with its former steady light.

Frank, after having his eyes opened, as he thought, to the real state of affairs about the house, and feeling that he had been too harsh in his former judgment, devoted himself to Heloise. Nor did he find it a severe task, for she exerted herself to please as she never had before, and fairly dazzled him with her sparkling vivacity.

Jean, completely deceived by Heloise's confidence on that never-to-be-forgotten night and the subsequent good understanding which seemed suddenly to have arisen between Frank and her guest, accepted the situation meekly, and if her gentle breast felt any pain, she gave no evidence outwardly of it. She placidly set about the task Heloise had given her, of entertaining Duncan, with amiable obedience.

And Heloise—well, she was intoxicated with the success of her stratagem. She was fairly wild with exuberance of spirits, planning all sorts of excursions,

taking the lead in every project which could afford an excuse for keeping the four together—for, of course, it was essential that Frank should see the other two in each other's society as much as possible—and participating in all things with an abandon, a radiant gayety that bewildered and fascinated Frank.

But she knew she could not keep this up forever. Her stay had already been prolonged beyond the time originally set and whilst everything was going just as she wanted it, she was too shrewd a girl not to know that her plans might at any moment be upset by some trivial incident bringing about explanations. And she further knew that, if Frank detected her again in double dealing, she must give him up forever.

With all the wild intensity of her nature she loved him. She had been interested in him when they first met, and piqued with him for so readily leaving her. Her pursuit of him had originated more from that pique than any other cause. She had determined to bring him again to her feet and then taste the sweet revenge of refusing him with scornful emphasis. But she had been playing with edged-tools. The trap she had set for another she had herself fallen into, and now realized how her whole life's happiness lay in his hands, and that without him she would be unendurably miserable.

When she awoke to this fact, with the usual impetuosity and decision which characterized her, she resolved that she could not go home without being his affianced wife, and set her busy little brain at work to accomplish that end.

These thoughts had come to her at the time when she dropped the mask she wore to the outer world and secure in her chamber at night, indulged in introspection with a degree of frank cynicism quite refreshing in one apparently so volatile.

The following day she contrived to be found by Frank alone in the roomy parlor. A bright fire—for the weather was getting chilly—danced and flickered in the grate, casting its ruddy glow over the substantial and comfortable furniture of the room, and adding no little to the cheeriness already given by the large windows and streaming sunlight.

Heloise had assumed a pose of most graceful dejection, and with her face resting on one of her delicately formed hands, seemed buried in thought, gazing into the fire-light abstractedly. So profound was this reverie that he entered and stood looking at her for some time, apparently unseen.

As he gazed, two large pearly tears started from her eyes and traversed her peachy cheeks unheeded. The sight of them touched a spot in Frank's nature that had never before been moved. All his big heart was stirred in sympathy.

"Miss Churchill—Heloise, what distresses you?" he exclaimed, coming hastily forward and taking the unoccupied hand in his with a pressure that was a little more than friendly.

With a violent start she seemed to come to herself, and hastily brushing the tears away, returned his greeting with a forced laugh, very different from her usual ringing ebullition of gayety.

"I—I don't know! How do you do, Mr. Manly?"

You came in so unexpectedly that I did not hear you. I was thinking—I beg your pardon, what did you ask me?" She never looked better than when standing with flushed cheeks and embarrassed mien, she stammered and hesitated, apparently completely unnerved.

"I asked what was distressing you? I beg your pardon, however, for I do not wish to add to your distress by recalling the painful theme."

"Oh, it is nothing. I must be going home soon and I was just thinking how kind you all had been to me and what a nice time we have had. Jean is coming down to visit me soon, and I must try to make her stay as pleasant as possible. But I can never make hers so delightful as mine has been."

"And the recollection of the nice time you have had and anticipation of nicer times ahead, caused those two priceless pearls to be wasted to the world? Do you always cry when you think of such subjects?"

His words were commonplace, almost trifling; but there was a note of deep sympathy in his clear voice and a shade of tenderness on his open face—which reflected every emotion of his soul—that showed he was more in earnest than his words would imply.

"Cry? I was not crying. At least I don't think I was. Was I?"

"You most certainly were."

"Well, of course I am sorry to leave this dear old place where all have been so good to me. The MacDonalds are so hospitable, and Jean, oh, yes! I am grieving because I am going to leave Jean and—and the rest of them."

“And though Jean is coming to see you in a little while, you are afflicted at leaving her?”

“Oh, no! that is—yes, of course! Oh Mr. Manly! it is cruel of you to so cross-question me.” And she stifled a half-sob and turned her glorious eyes, all swimming in tears, full upon him.

“It is cruel and I most humbly apologize. But Miss Churchill, can I hope that among your regrets for friends left behind, I may claim a share of your thoughts? That any memory of the pleasant times we have passed in the last few weeks will linger pleasantly in your mind?”

“How can you ask? The brightest, sweetest moments of my life have been when, in a party or alone together, we have passed—Oh! what am I saying?”

“If you are saying what you mean, you are giving me courage to say that which has long been on my mind, which has indeed been my thought by day, my dream at night. Miss Churchill,—may I say Heloise?—if the honest, true, enduring affection of a man’s whole heart, if the entire devotion of a life can be any reason why you should think favorably of him, that affection, that devotion I offer you. I don’t do things by halves, and when I say I lay my heart at your feet, and place my whole life at your disposal, I mean every word of it. Heloise, my own heart’s darling, may I hope some day to win you—some day that you will consent to become my own little wife?”

His manner was very earnest now, as he retained the little hand he had taken at the commencement of his speech.

The hand fluttered a moment, but lay at last unresistingly in his strong clasp. Gently he drew her to him and placed his arm about her waist. A great hope sprang up in his breast and gleamed from his eyes.

“Heloise, my darling, do you consent? Do you love me?”

And the scheming little head with its piquant face, sank softly on his shoulder and her voice deep with genuine emotion now, murmured softly in his ear.

“Oh, Frank, you know I do!”

And as the nervous arms clasped her firmly in their embrace, drawing her closer to his bosom, Heloise Churchill felt that she had never known true happiness, or dreamed what it could be before.

Long they sat and talked as lovers only can talk, saying the same thing over and over again, varying at times, perhaps, the language, but returning always to the same idea. And as the clear pure voice of Jean in the adjoining room, came floating in, singing one of her newest songs, the words seemed singularly appropriate.

“Thy daily question, love, is, Lovest thou me?”

The same reply I give thee ever;

I love thee dear, so tenderly!

Wilt thou believe me never?

She sang, as she approached the door, perhaps with a shrewd suspicion that it would be only fair to give warning before opening it too suddenly.

“How do you do, Mr. Manly?” she said, extending her hand. “You will take tea with us, of course.”

“Well, I have a partial engagement, but—”

“Oh! this is Heloise’s last night with us. You must not allow her to be entirely deserted.”

“Well, since you put it that way, I will break the other engagement.”

“Oh, I am so glad!”

“You will excuse me whilst I make a few preparations for tea?” asked Heloise, as she arose and left the room.

Once out of the room she flew to her own apartment, where she struck an attitude that would have done credit to Rachel, and in a ringing voice, cried:

“*Io, triumphe.*”

After which she executed a regular old fashioned “Juba” break-down, which one of the negroes had taught her, and finished the performance with one of her monologues, addressed to her image in the mirror:

“And thus, you see, my dear Miss Churchill, that your perfect candor, your absolute and unshrinking veracity, have brought their own reward! You good, sweet, amiable, little girl, run along now and get ready to take your supper with your *fiancé*. Do you hear that—your *fiancé*? But before going, let me tell you a great secret, one that may be of value to you in future years. No matter how cold, how forbidding, how heartless a man is, let him see a tear in a woman’s eye, brought there by love for him, and you’ve *got* him, you have undoubtedly *got* him.”

And sweeping a farewell courtesy, the madcap danced downstairs, where she soon had the entire family in roars of laughter at her queer sayings.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FOR some hours after the departure of Captain Breckenridge, Ransom Randolph sat in deep thought. The frown which had corrugated his brow at first, gradually faded, and a softer, more tender look came into his eyes.

"Dear old Wick!" he murmured, "He's always right. He speaks so straight at a fellow that he riles him sometimes, but his is always the true view of any question of honor. I will do just as he says and I will do it before I talk with him again. I'll see Margie at once."

He rapidly changed his dressing gown and slippers for a more suitable attire, and descending the stairs, knocked at the door of the apartments occupied by the ladies. "Come in!" said a voice in response. "Oh, it's you! Well, come in very quietly, for Natalie is completely fagged out and wants to sleep. She has just dozed off, so don't awaken her."

He came in quietly, and pressed a soft kiss upon her responsive lips.

"Close the door, so as not to awaken her," he said.

"But she may think it strange, should she be aroused."

"Never mind; we must risk that. I have much to say to you."

"Why, Ransom, what makes you so grave?" she said, for the first time seeing his face. "What has happened? Nothing new—no fresh misfortune?"

"No, darling, no fresh misfortune; but I have news of the greatest importance, and much that I wish to say to you. It most assuredly is not *bad* news, sweetheart," he added, reassuringly, as he saw the frightened look in her face.

"Then, what is it? Don't keep me in suspense so long."

"Once before I kept you in suspense; once before I begged you to be brave. Now, are your nerves braced?"

"Yes! yes! Go on, do!"

"Peyton Dulany, your husband, is dead."

"Dead? How? Where?"

"The details would be a useless horror to you. He is dead. A violent death."

"Caused by some one?"

"It is so suspected. The author of his taking off is not known. Every one has his theory, and I have mine; but no one knows positively just how it came about. He was found dead and thoroughly identified."

"It is shameful for me to speak so, but for years I endured his infidelities, his carefully planned slights, more cruel than blows or abuse. I have been practically exiled from my home, ashamed to face the sympathetic pretences of the world, where once I was a leader. He has caused me so much suffering, so much humiliation, so much pain, that I can only say: Thank God!"

"I saw enough of his conduct to understand what

a torment he made your life. But does not his death suggest any thoughts or plans to you?"

"No; only a great sense of relief, so overpowering as to absorb other thoughts."

"Have you, then, not contemplated a possibility of this happening—never dreamed of what might follow?"

"No. What do you mean?"

"Margie, I have never urged you to secure a divorce, partly because of my religious views on the subject, but more especially because I knew you to be heart-sick of the publicity of your affairs already, and that you shrank from adding to the scandal already created. But now, my darling, you are free as I am. We can be married at once."

"Married! Oh, Ransom!" Many emotions arose to give emphasis to that word, as she buried her glowing face on his shoulder.

"Yes, darling; and at once. I fear we may not have been as careful as we thought, and busy tongues have been bandying our names about already."

"Is that true?"

"I fear it is. At all events, an instant marriage will save much trouble."

"And cause much talk. Why, how could I explain to Natalie?"

"Do not attempt to explain. She may guess pretty close to the truth."

"But the gossips——"

"Can say what they please. You will not return to Louisville, but go with me abroad. After a few months, we can go to my home in Richmond,

where, as my wife, the few who may know something of the story will not dare to annoy you with reference to it or the hateful past. We can begin again, darling, and in the full summer of life, perhaps, secure some of the fruits that were denied our earlier ventures. Do you consent?"

"Consent? Oh, my noble, grand-souled darling! You offer me hopes of happiness and of heaven that I never dreamed could come to me. Whenever you wish I am ready to go with you."

"Then let it be to-morrow."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes. It seems sudden, but the sooner the better. If you will prepare Miss Natalie, I will secure Wick. They will be sufficient witnesses and all the wedding party we need. We can discuss the means of making this public at our leisure."

"Have it your own way," she answered, and with a farewell kiss, he went to search for his friend, to tell him what he had done.

He inquired at the hotel for him, but was told he was not in. A bar-room loungee standing near, seeing a chance for a drink, drawled out in that slow manner supposed to be characteristic of all Southerners, but really only very perceptible in the less educated classes:

"I seed Cap'n Brack'nridge goin' down' the street just now, over by Spanish town. He were in mighty cur'os comp'ny, too, I tell ye."

"Who was he with?"

"Pete, the touter."

"Who is he?"

"Well, he's one of these here no'count niggers. Touts hoss races in summer, an' loaf's around in winter. Ready to steal, 'r lie, yes, 'r cut a th'oat, f'r matter o' that. He's a powerful bad nigger, I tell ye, and he was heading right to'rds Spanish Tony's cut-th'oat dive."

"That's strange! I wonder what could have taken him there?"

"Well, 'taint my business, I reck'n, but Pete's the slickest nigger *I* ever see. I wouldn't be s'prised ef he hadn't been stringin' the cap'n bout some poor devil that needed help and got him in Tony's to rob him."

"My God, man! Do you know what you are saying?"

"You bet I do? Tony has the worst hole in *this* town an' I know some right peart places too."

"Do you really think the captain in any danger?"

"It's mighty dry talkin', stranger."

"Heh? oh! Certainly. Won't you have a drink?"

"Well—since you mention' it, I d'no but I would take a leetle lick."

"Do you think Captain Breckenridge in danger?" asked Randolph again, after the loafer had taken enough whiskey to have paralyzed an ordinary man.

"Well, you see the man that downs Capt'n Breckenridge is got to be a good man, and don't you forgit it. But if they've got any gum games, they won't give him no show, d'ye see? They'll creep up behind him and stick one of them thar machites in his back, 'fore he could say Jack Robinson."

"Is Spanish Tony's far from here?"

"'Bout mile, or maybe mile an' a half."

"Could you find time to show me the place?"

"S'worth about fo' bits for me to do it."

"All right! come along. How long since you saw him?"

"'Bout half or three-quarters of an hour."

"Well, the walk wont hurt me anyway. But we must not lose time."

"I'm your man."

And with a brisker step than his shambling figure and bloated face would have promised, he showed the way out of the door and into the street.

Twenty minutes brisk walking brought them to the neighborhood of Spanish Tony's dive. A crowd of idlers, principally negroes, gathered about a fallen man, obstructed their way. They pushed forward to see what the occasion of the assemblage was. "Step back, gentlemen!" said a fine-looking policeman with a soldierly bearing. "Don't crowd too closely."

"What's the matter?" asked Randolph.

"Some fellow has been getting into trouble in Spanish Tony's place. Pretty badly hurt, I reckon."

"Let me see him!" said Randolph, a great fear swelling his heart.

He pushed hastily into the crowd and there, torn, dishevelled and bleeding from a dozen wounds and entirely unconscious, lay the object of his search.

"My God, it's Wick!" he cried, bending over him.

"Do you know him?" asked the policeman.

“ Know him ? I should say I do ! ” Take him to my room, Number — Carondelet Street, and get the two best doctors in town,” answered Randolph.

The unconscious man was soon placed in a carriage and driven to the place indicated.

CHAPTER XIX.

NATHANIEL PEGRAM sat at his desk, working hard, as usual. Natalie had been gone some two weeks, and the house had been very lonesome and desolate without her, for the stony heart of the money-king had just one crevice into which his daughter had found a way. Had she cringed to him as others did, or given any evidence of fear of him, or exhibited the "womanish weakness" he so utterly despised, he would have regarded her as a rather expensive, but necessary evil. But she had never feared or yielded to him. As a child he had been unable to break her stubborn will; as a girl she was headstrong, and now, as a woman, fighting for her love, she not only defied but despised him.

Every one else, everything else had bent before the force of his inexorable will. He recognized the heredity of his own characteristic in his daughter, and admired and respected her for qualities which would have caused the heart of some parents the keenest anxiety.

He missed his daughter now, very much more than ever before; but he resolutely devoted himself to business, and in the complexities of commerce and Wall Street, sought diversion and recreation. He had just become one of a syndicate to purchase a large Southern railroad. The negotiations had been com-

pleted, and Nathaniel Pegram had been elected president, with his headquarters in New York. It was through a large bundle of papers, pertaining to this road, that he was working his way, in a mole-like, dogged manner, when the young man who had succeeded Frank Manly, brought in a card.

He glanced at it and read "McAllister Browne."
"I will see him immediately."

A little, round, bald-headed man, wearing glasses, and with a blonde beard, turning gray, parted in the middle, and very much brushed out, came steaming into the room like a small tug.

"How do you do, Mr. Browne! Glad to see you. Take a chair. I am just looking over some of our papers now. What's the news?"

"Lots of news. Big deal on hand. Chickahominy people want to compromise."

His words were like his actions, jerky and nervous, but full of energy.

"Chickahominy railroad! Do you mean to say that the road we have been fighting so bitterly for months and which has met every move we have made with one as good in return—the road that to-day prevents our practically controlling the Southeast, wants to come to terms?"

"Just it. Our fight has depressed stock. Three of their directors bought a control. Want to sell! See?"

"Yes, I do see. News, indeed! Can they be relied upon?"

"Bring stock certificates or no sale. Want to buy?"

"If their figures are at all reasonable, of course I do. By-the-way, leaving the question of terms aside, suppose we buy this stock for our road. I mean let the railroad pay for it and use our money for outside purchase of the stock."

"How about other stockholders?"

"They can't object to an expenditure that will at once silence the most formidable opposition and give them strong feeders from every point in the South."

"Better hold directors' meeting."

"I will call one for the earliest possible date. In the meantime of course the greatest secrecy must be maintained."

"Of course; nobody but you and I know it."

After some further talk, in which the terms of sale were discussed, the little man went puffing out the door.

Pegram watched him as he went out and pushed the electric bell on his desk.

"James, I want you to take this order to my brokers with the utmost despatch. Every minute is precious. It is too important to send by other hands. You understand? Greatest haste!"

"Certainly, sir."

In an incredibly short time the senior member of Fleece and Shearem was reading an order that caused his eyes to open to their widest extent. He looked at the paper and then at the bearer, recognized him as one of Pegram's clerks; looked at the order again, gave a low prolonged whistle, and with a simple "all right" to the waiting clerk, stepped over to the stock exchange, where he was soon doing more business than any three men in the room.

It was just before the "noon call" and business had slackened up a bit; but on Shearem's entry and vigorous bidding the greatest interest began to be shown. There are no keener set of men in the world than were gathered round, watching old Shearem as he bought block after block of the comparatively unknown stock.

Every one suspected "a deal" was on; but no one could tell what. Excitement was greatly increased by the rapid entrance of a young broker, known to be greatly in the confidence of McAllister Browne, who also began bidding on the stock.

Suspicion now became a certainty, and soon all over the room offers were being made for the stock. Several with "shorts" out had to "cover" at heavy loss, and the stock jumped several points in so short a time that it absorbed the interest of the room to the exclusion of nearly all the others. And still old Shearem and his young rival bought all they could find for sale and at whatever price it was offered.

Within ten days the directors' meeting was held, the purchase of the controlling interest in Chickahominy, made known, and the public, eager to avail themselves of the expected rise, bought heavily. The price advanced sharply on the general demand, and Nathaniel Pegram gradually released his large holdings with a profit six figures would scarcely indicate.

But the game was not so entirely in their hands as they had imagined. A disgruntled stockholder of the Chickahominy railroad had resuscitated an act of the Tennessee legislature some years back, which for-

bade any railroad from holding more than one share of stock in any other railroad running to competing points. He immediately brought suit to prevent the consummation of the trade, and secured an injunction restraining the president and directors of the rival road from disposing of the Chickahominy stock held in the name of the Kentucky railroad. This caused a revulsion in the market. Both the Chickahominy and Kentucky railroads were too little known for general investment, and were only valuable for speculative purposes. There was consequently a "heavy drop" in prices of both stocks.

It was in this emergency that Browne again sought Pegram.

"Bad state of affairs we're in now!" said Browne.

"Oh! I don't know. Just as soon as this injunction is dissolved we can transfer the stock to the individual directors and resume control of both roads."

"Three of us have a big scheme. Half of Chickahominy tied up by court. Street scared about affairs anyway. We propose selling a lot of it short, run the price down, buy to cover, and then buy enough long to cover. Easier to corner half the stock than the whole."

"Yes, but suppose somebody chooses to cover whilst you are selling short?"

"We have possession of half the stock. Who knows where it is? If they get us in a tight place, why, make deliveries from stock certificates held by order of court, and before the time to make delivery, we can buy them back again."

"Oh, I see! but that's contempt of court, and contempt of a Federal court is serious business."

"Of course, but the chance of detection is very small. In the first place, we can demoralize the market, so as not to need the certificates at all. In the second, they could be used and returned and nobody the wiser. You see the strength of our position is that we can make the available stock certificates either the full issue or half, as we choose."

"Yes, I see! but I am getting old and timid now. I don't like the odor of the contempt of courts."

"Well? You won't join us?"

"No. I am too much afraid. Good scheme, too."

"We are strong enough as it is, but thought we would give you an option, as we seem to be pretty well in the same boat."

"Many thanks, but I would rather not."

"Very well, sorry you won't join us. Good-bye," and the pudgy little figure puffed out of the door, muttering as he did so:

"Pegram is losing his grip. To think that he, of all men, should let the fear of a court stand between him and a big deal."

The old man sat motionless and in profound silence for nearly an hour after his visitor had departed, and then a twinkle came into his eye, and the nearest approach to a smile that his cold, stern countenance had exhibited for years.

"James," he said, summoning his clerk, "I wish you would step around to Shearem and ask him if he can't dine with me to-night. Tell him that no one else will be there, and that I have a matter to discuss

with him which cannot well be arranged elsewhere ; one of some moment to both of us."

After such a message from such a source, it can be imagined that it was quite convenient for the wily old broker to accept the invitation. The two gray heads might have been seen close together in a mysterious confabulation which lasted well into the night.

The course of the Chickahominy stock was quite peculiar for the next three weeks. It sank a little under heavy selling orders, but always returned to nearly its normal figures, ranging from fifty to sixty per cent on par value. In vain did McAllister Browne and his syndicate fling huge blocks on the market. Steadily and quietly they were taken, though nobody seemed to be the especial champion of the stock. Finally, on comparing notes, they found they had a line of shorts outequal to the block of certificates held by themselves under injunction order from the Federal courts. Then they began to buy a little to feel the market, and discovered there was little or no stock for sale. The price began to shoot up. McAllister Browne was served at nearly the same time with a notification from his broker that delivery of stock sold had been demanded and a notification from the Federal court to produce the certificates of stock entrusted to his care, but which an injunction forbade his selling.

For the first time a suspicion of the truth flashed on his mind. The stock had now begun to jump wildly, with none for sale. Fifty, sixty, seventy, ninety cents were bid and no sellers. A little inquiry

developed the fact that Nathaniel Pegram had "cornered" the market by buying more stock than was outstanding to deliver, and by a timely notice had prevented the handling of enjoined stock

He held his four co-directors of the Kentucky railroad between his thumb and forefinger, and squeezed them dry! He finally sold them back their stock for two hundred and sixty per cent and pocketed nearly a million dollars!

The next meeting of the board of directors of the Kentucky railroad was a stormy one, and it ended in Nathaniel Pegram formally resigning as president and director.

CHAPTER XX.

HELOISE CHURCHILL took her departure from the hospitable roof that had been the scene of her final triumph, and proceeded home. Frank followed in the course of a day or two, according to orders received from "head-quarters" and after spending one evening with his *fiancée*, braced himself up and "bearded the lion in his den;" in other words, called upon Mr. Churchill, sire to the object of his adoration, in his law office down town.

He was received kindly; his suit prospered even beyond his hopes. He spent the morning in sweet commune with Heloise and took the afternoon train for Lexington.

On the cars he met Charlie Duncan and a right warm greeting followed. After they had secured a seat in the smoker, and were comfortably established, Duncan blurted out:

"I say, Manly, how are you and our fair visitor getting along? You are a sly dog! Keeping yourself aloof for five or six weeks and then cutting right in, yes, and cutting me right out. I never dreamed you were looking that way at all. Thought I had a walk over, when at once a dark horse shoots to front and wins, hands down. How do you manage it?"

"Why, you Mormon! what do you want with two? Now that your affair with the hostess has been arranged all straight, what in the world do you want with another?"

"With the hostess? What do you mean?"

"Oh, come now, you commenced this chaff. Don't flare up about it."

"I haven't the faintest idea of 'flaring up;' but I don't understand you, just the same."

"I mean the renewal of your engagement to Miss Jean."

"My dear fellow, I never was engaged to Jean MacDonald, so it could not be renewed."

"Are you serious?"

"I give you my word of honor that I am. I have always liked her and perhaps if I get enough encouragement, I may ask her soon; but up to this time I have never had the encouragement and dared not venture without it. What made you think we were?"

"Oh, nothing. Common rumor, and your sudden devotion, I suppose."

Frank lapsed into silence, scarcely speaking until they reached Lexington. The man's manner was so unembarrassed that he was forced to believe him, and yet he recalled distinctly that Heloise had spoken of it as something universally known.

On the evening of the following day he called upon Jean. She was very cordial in her reception and after a few commonplaces, began to tease him, if her gentle badinage could be called teasing, about his visit and his sweetheart.

"I don't think there is much room for you to

tease," he said, "since you are in the same boat, from all accounts."

"I? What do you mean? or rather with whom do you mean, for, of course, I understand that much."

"What! when you know I was a witness to the reunion of two loving hearts, you have the face to ask me with whom?"

"Oh, you mean Mr. Duncan?"

"Of course. Did I not see how suddenly he devoted himself to you? Couldn't I put two and two together—that is to say—your former engagement and his sudden resumption of attentions?"

"You have great perspicacity, Mr. Manly, but you missed it that time. In the first place we never were engaged, and in the second place his renewed devotions were simply because Heloise asked me—or rather"—she broke off abruptly and resumed after a pause. "Because I wanted to give a really reunited couple a chance to come to a complete reconciliation."

Frank looked at her keenly. Her serene countenance showed no sign of perturbation. She seemed to be speaking the truth, but—he would try again.

"Do you seriously tell me that you and Charlie Duncan were never engaged?"

"I pledge you my word that no serious words of love have ever passed between us. We never even had a mild flirtation. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I am surprised, that's all! I thought his manner so devoted, you know I am certain he must *feel* affection for you whether he speaks it or not," said Frank, getting out of it as best he could.

She repeated her assurance and he finished his call without further incident.

But when Frank went home that night, it was to think long and sternly. The one thing he most abhorred was deception, and it looked as though he had been deceived. Many severe notes did he concoct in his mind, and a few of them he wrote and destroyed.

At last his resolution was taken. He would take the first opportunity and go to Louisville, and if he found she had deceived him he would break the engagement at once.

Ah! Frank, in that word "if" there is a confession of weakness you are not aware of! At first it was a conviction, now it has become modified to an "if."

CHAPTER XXI.

TENDERLY the unconscious form of Captain Breckenridge was carried into the room he had so recently left, his heart filled with noble impulses. Randolph had gone ahead to break the news to the ladies, and had found it no easy task.

Mrs. Dulany, unstrung by the conflicting emotions of the day, had just finished acquainting Natalie with her projected marriage. It had been quite an effort to her, leaving her nervous system in a highly wrought condition. When she heard of the danger of the man she had known all her life, and who was one of her best friends, she would have broken down entirely but for Natalie.

The first shock of the news had almost overpowered the latter, but on learning that life was still left in the poor wounded body, and that all hope had not been abandoned, her great strength of character asserted itself. Pausing only to offer a few consoling words to her friend, she turned the task of further consolation over to Randolph, and mounting the stairs, boldly entered the room where her lover was to lie. She took entire charge of the arrangements; had the bed changed to a position where the surgeons could have access from either side, and ordered plenty of warm water and clean linen for bandages. Indeed,

it seemed that her whole nature was seeking relief in occupation. One gasping cry, as she reeled back from the blood-stained form of her lover when it was borne into the apartment, a sudden whitening of her cheeks, and she regained her self-command. She directed every movement herself, and soon saw him as comfortable as it was possible to make him.

The two surgeons arrived about the same time. Randolph explained the situation, and said the case looked so serious to him—and from his army experience he could form some estimate—that he wanted a consultation at once. Assenting silently, they went to work at once to diagnose the case.

Wick had many cuts in various parts of his powerful body ; some serious, none necessarily fatal. The greatest cause of apprehension was from loss of blood, which had been excessive and which had weakened him dangerously. The wounds being dressed and the consultation held, the spokesman addressed Randolph :

“ It is entirely a question of nursing and natural recuperative power,” he said. “ In almost any other man I should say there had been too much blood lost ; but we have never seen a finer physique, and he may pull through. For the rest, good nursing is more essential than anything else.”

“ That is my province,” said Natalie, firmly. Give me the directions, and I will see that they are carried out.”

The surgeon looked at her for a moment, and read in a glance that here was the master-spirit, and from thenceforth it was to her that he addressed himself.

She listened quietly to his directions, neither losing a word nor forgetting one essential detail.

Under her systematic and unremitting attention, Wick slowly regained his consciousness. He opened his gray eyes, undimmed by his great physical weakness, and fixed them with a long, lingering look of unutterable love upon the fair face bent over him. He attempted to raise himself, but she pushed him gently back on the pillow.

"You have been badly hurt, dear," she said, in reply to a mute look of inquiry, "very badly hurt; but you will get well if you obey your nurse and don't excite yourself. I am your nurse, you understand, and have been put in absolute command. Don't even speak"—and she laid her finger lightly on his lips. "I'll tell you all you want to know. You were found by Mr. Randolph, who heard of your going to that horrid place. He had you brought to his room, where you are now under charge of two of the best physicians in New Orleans and the best nurse in the world—that's me," she added, forcing a cheerful smile and adopting a tone she thought best calculated to divert and encourage him.

His countenance cleared perceptibly. He obeyed her meekly, and gradually sank into a calm, peaceful sleep. And so the surgeon found them, she sitting absolutely motionless, her steady eyes never moving from his haggard countenance, and he sleeping as quietly as an infant.

For four days she left his bedside only when he slept, and then merely to take her meals, or to throw herself, dressed as she was, ready for any call, on a

lounge in an adjoining room, to snatch a few hours' rest. Day and night she watched and hung over his couch, until one morning the kindly old surgeon laid his hand on her head and said:

"My dear child you have conquered the enemy. The unfavorable symptoms have disappeared. His recovery is now a matter of time. Unless something entirely new occurs he is entirely out of danger."

Then only did the brave soul falter. Then for the first time she broke down, and her overwrought nature asserted its femininity in a fit of weeping, so vehement and so hysterical that the physician was startled and alarmed. After a little, however, she quieted down, and retiring to her room, went to bed for the first time since the accident, and slept as she had never slept before.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE Kentucky railroad people were very sore over the manner in which they had been outwitted by Nathaniel Pegram, and many were the schemes they hatched to catch him. They succeeded once or twice in thwarting some of his plans. Finally their persistent interference began to annoy him, and he resolved to strike back, "Teach them another lesson," as he phrased it.

To this end he put on his thinking cap, and having become familiar with the business of the road when president, he knew just where to strike the most telling blows against it. Having concocted a plan which seemed to combine the two pleasing results of increasing his bank account, and, at the same time, punishing his enemies, he called on A. Corvus Jones, and found him seated in a palatial private office, glancing leisurely over the morning paper, apparently the idlest man in the city. A large force of clerks in the outer office were kept busy enough, but Mr. Jones never seemed to be occupied, nor to have an idea beyond the passing moment. Pegram, however, knew him better than most men, though even he but partially, and was well aware that Jones was far from being the idle man he affected to be.

Mr. Jones rose to receive his guest, displaying a figure which would attract attention in any crowd.

He was nearly six feet five inches in height, and of a herculean build. His massive shoulders rose squarely on either side, and he had a habit of standing close to a man and looking down upon him from his superior height, like a huge vulture, watching for a chance to drop upon his victim from the summit of some inaccessible crag. The appositeness of this simile was intensified by the forward droop of the head, and the aquiline characteristics of his features.

"Ah, Mr. Pegram! How are you? What's the news? Just reading a theatrical pamphlet that's a scorcher, have you seen it?"

"I never go to theatres, nor take interest in things pertaining thereto."

"Then you have missed more fun in your life than you will ever guess."

"I dare say, but I want to talk to you about a business matter. I have a scheme to suggest to you."

"All right; not doing a thing just at present. Awfully slow!"

"I wonder how many clerks you would work if you were busy?"

"Oh, those fellows! Merely routine work, that's all. What's your scheme?"

"I want to run a railroad through eastern—or rather east of central Kentucky, down South, and establish a trunk line."

Jones, who kept posted on the transactions of the stock exchange as thoroughly perhaps as any other operator in the street, smiled knowingly.

"Want to stop their annoyance and make 'em let

you alone, eh?" he asked, with a good-humored smile. "Well, you are not a man to lose money for spite. Let's hear what your whole project involves."

Pegram took a bundle of papers from his capacious pocket, and soon the two were busy with maps, statistics, estimates, and all those things which pertain to railroad building on paper.

Jones had grown very quiet and lost his airy indifference of manner.

"Looks like a good scheme," he said. "All it needs is local support. I like it well enough to join you in preliminary investigations, at any rate."

"Well, that means a great deal, coming from you. The first thing to do is to get a charter through the Kentucky Legislature."

"Not much trouble about that, is there?"

"That depends on whether my former colleagues of the Kentucky railroad discover what's up. It's a pretty hard matter to get anything through that they oppose. I have known it done, but it is difficult enough to be avoided, if possible."

"I see. By-the-way, Legislature in session?"

"Yes; I believe so."

"Well, I am such an idle fellow, I won't have anything to do for some time after eight days from now. I believe I will go and look at the blue-grass regions. I have not been there for some years, and I want to pick up a few horses whilst I am out there."

"Of course. A brilliant idea. If I were to go they would suspect some scheme and watch me too closely."

Having come to a good understanding, the two

schemers separated, with the agreement that Jones was to go upon his search for horses, on the first of the following week.

This plan was carried out as agreed, but the corporation they had to fight was lynx-eyed. The first move toward introducing the bill before the house, developed so vigorous an opposition as to demonstrate that the enemy was awake and prepared to fight to the bitter end.

Jones was a man signally well qualified to conduct such a fight. With a most plausible manner and cordial off-hand bearing, he made friends readily, whilst his really logical brain enabled him to "put a point" with incisive clearness very convincing to his hearers.

He had to contend against a trained opposition, however, and it was likely to be a drawn battle so far as forces were concerned. But as he wanted to do something that the opposition wished to prevent, a drawn battle would be equivalent to a defeat.

In this emergency he took the cars for New York, and marched into Pegram's office, almost unannounced.

"Hello! Why, Jones, I thought you were at Frankfort."

"Just left. Came on for a consultation."

"What's the matter?"

"Everything is the matter. Our charter will be defeated on the final vote, if something isn't done."

"How much is needed?" asked Pegram, cynically.

"It isn't money that's needed. Money goes a great way, but the other side has as much as we have. Besides the Kentucky papers have taken the

matter up, or rather the opposition has subsidized several of them, and they are raising the cry against foreign capital and bribery. Consequently, a number of men whom we might otherwise bring over to our side, dare not declare for us for fear of being suspected of accepting bribes by their constituents. Things look very blue, I can tell you."

"But you have not given up the fight?"

"No sir; nor will I until the final vote. But I want a consultation and I want some information, too."

"About what!"

"The situation of affairs in a nut-shell is this: The opposition has succeeded in raising a cry of corruption, as I said, until the members are afraid to help us. We need the moral support of some man with brains enough to see the real advantages of our scheme and a reputation above aspersion; a man who, it is known, cannot be bought and whose backing would give the politicians the courage of their convictions. I have found such a man. He listened, I thought, favorably, to the arguments I advanced, until I handed him a circular with the list of directors. He took it, glanced at it, started suddenly and said, 'What you ask of me is impossible, sir,' and declined to talk further on the subject. All the other directors are local men. I have seen every one of them and find he has no quarrel with any of them; consequently it must be with you or me. His treatment of me satisfies me that I am not the one, consequently it must be you."

"With me!" said Pegram, "why, I don't know a single person in Kentucky."

“ Well, that’s the way it looks. I wanted to know what the difficulty was, and if it be irreconcilable.”

“ That’s very strange. Who is the man ? ”

Captain Wicklyffe Breckenridge, of Woodford.”

A pistol fired in his face could not have startled Nathaniel Pegram more.

“ Captain Wicklyffe Breckenridge ! ” he repeated, in profound amazement.

“ Yes. Do you know him ? ”

“ Why, he is a horse-jockey, a gambler, a follower of races.”

“ You are as much mistaken as possible. He stands higher to-day than any man in his section. He could go to Congress any time he wants to, but won’t have it. He takes very little interest in politics ; but when once aroused on a question of interest to either the State or his section of it, he is a perfect firebrand.”

“ And the success of our scheme depends on him ? ”

“ Yes. You see our scheme will benefit his section of the country, but it is inimical to the interests of Louisville. The press of the latter are making such a howl that we must get some outside influence. With his high character, which his worst enemy dare not assail, he would be a tower of strength to us. Should he take it into his head to oppose us, he could defeat us easily. The fact that the road affects his section of the country directly, makes his admirers, and they are legion, anxious to hear his verdict.”

“ What does he say ? ”

“ Nothing as yet. He was badly hurt in New Orleans and has just returned. He seems very un-

decided and replies to all questions that he has been too ill to examine into the matter. The other side is moving heaven and earth to influence him. Can you tell me anything that would help me?"

"Not now. I—I did have some trouble with him and fear I have gained his enmity."

"May I ask how?"

"I don't care to tell you, if you will pardon a seemingly impolite answer. I had a different idea about him. How can a horseman have such a standing?"

"Why, my dear fellow, you have some of the oddest puritanical notions. A horseman simply means a man who raises and sells fine horses, occasionally racing them for the purpose of increasing their value. It is no worse than raising fine cattle and showing them at some agricultural fair for a prize."

"But the betting that goes on?"

"Do you really see any difference between betting on a horse-race and gambling on Wall Street?"

"It is an entirely different matter."

"I confess the distinction is too subtle. When a man pays seventy-five for Chickahominy that he knows is not worth forty, he simply bets it will go up before it goes down. Margin speculation is gambling of the worst sort."

"Yet you do it."

"Yes, and I bet on horse-races. I don't claim that either is a highly edifying transaction. But that is straying from the point. Can you in any way relieve yourself from Captain Breckenridge's enmity?"

"I don't know," answered Pegram slowly.

"Well if you can, you had better do it; for I tell you squarely I have been all over the ground, and the only show you have of getting ahead of Browne and his colleagues is to secure the support of that same Captain Wicklyffe Breckenridge. I must be off now, but I will come to-morrow and see what you think about it. If you can placate him, I shall go back and fight it out, yes, and win it; but if not, I am afraid I may find something here to keep me. Good-bye!"

As the bulky form of his partner in the enterprise stalked out of the door, Nathaniel Pegram sank back in perplexed reverie.

He was now satisfied that he had been too hasty in his treatment of the Kentuckian. His daughter's continued absence, too, weighed on him, for she was evidently making every excuse to avoid coming home—to avoid him, in fact. Again he had gone into the plan to "teach Browne a lesson," and a defeat, after so long a fight, would be humiliating in the extreme. All these reasons had great weight with him—almost enough to decide him. But when he remembered how Breckenridge had braved and defied him, the color rose in his cheek and his obstinate chin grew squarer.

But he was very much perplexed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE hard-headed old merchant continued to be very much puzzled throughout the remainder of the day, and the perplexed look did not leave his face as he entered his carriage and was driven home.

It was about the dinner hour, and with a hasty adjustment of his attire he walked abstractedly into the dining-room, and almost over his daughter.

"Natalie!" he exclaimed, surprised.

"Yes. How do you do, father?" she said, giving him a cold kiss and taking her seat at the table in her accustomed place, without further comment.

"Have you had a pleasant trip?" he asked, at length.

"Very. One of the happiest of my life!"

"And yet you are home sooner than you expected."

"Yes, circumstances in the shape of a wedding took my chaperone abroad, and for the same reason given by the drunken husband in 'Punch,' I have come home, namely, 'all the other places are shut up.'"

"Natalie! Your tone is as unbecoming as your illustration is ill-timed."

"Is it? I'll guard both better in future."

"What the—the deuce do you mean by speaking and acting as you are doing?"

"I don't know. Tired from my trip, I guess, and regretting the friends I have left."

"Preferring them to your own home and father?"

"Well, frankly, yes, I do."

"Natalie! What do you mean by speaking to me that way?"

"I thought my language particularly plain and perspicuous."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that since you have taken it into your head to thwart my life's happiness for a mere whim, you can't expect me to enjoy our *tete-à-tetes* as I might with a reasonable human being."

"Do you mean to tell me to my face I am not a reasonable being?"

"Now look here, father. A man comes to see you whom everybody respects and speaks well of. He pays me the highest compliment a man can pay a woman, by asking of you permission to take me to his house and heart. Do you appreciate that compliment? Do you even treat him civilly? Not you! You fly into one of your insane rages, call him all sorts of names, and threaten to have him ejected from your office. Months have passed, your rage has had time to cool and you have had ample opportunity to find out the real truth about him. Knowing the truth about him as you do, or would, if you would only inquire; and above all, knowing that he is the only man I ever met that I ever told you I wanted to marry, what have you done? Have you sought him out and said to him as a man and a gentleman would, that you regretted your foolish temper? Have you in any way shown any consideration for my feelings? Not a bit of it! You have nursed your rage, encour-

aged yourself in your wrong-headedness, until you cannot with justice complain if I do not feel the same toward you as formerly. In fact I can never really respect you until you have gone to that much injured, noble-hearted man and confessed your error."

Strong interest and perhaps a sense of justice were prompting Nathaniel Pegram to humble his stubborn pride. But this tirade had the very opposite effect. The truth in it, coming in such a way, stung him as nothing else would.

"And have you finished your scolding?" he asked, with a sneer. "Did your horse-jockey lover teach you to so far forget your womanhood and filial obedience as to so address your father? Then hear me. You shall never marry that man with my consent, and you know what to expect if you do without it!"

"I do not need to have you repeat it. I never knew you to retract anything you ever said in my life, and the more in the wrong you are, the more determined you are in having your way."

"Right or wrong you have my say!"

"Yes, and you have mine. You are making me hate and despise you."

"Natalie!"

"Well?"

"Do not go too far or ——"

"Or what? I am getting reckless now and don't much fear anything you do."

"Or I might go to your lover with a little story."

Do so and you would probably save me much unhappiness by so doing. I know Wick Breckenridge

too well not to feel sure that he would not blame me or make me feel that I was the least lowered in his eyes. It is only because I want to spare him the pain of knowing, that I hesitate at all. God knows I have been tempted often enough in the last two months to tell him and end it all."

"You would not dare do that!" he exclaimed, paling slightly.

"I don't know. I have some of your blind obstinacy and determination to carry one point at a time. If you drive me to it, I may do as I say."

"Do so and you tell it to the world."

"You would not—"

"I most certainly would."

"For your own sake you would be silent."

"For my own sake! I, a man nearly seventy years of age and many times a millionaire. What would the sneer of a few fools and flirts be to me? I have but little left in this life to live for, and if you leave me I shall have nothing."

"Father, I do not want to leave you. I do not want to quarrel with you, but why do you oppose me in this the great love of my life? The man is in every way worthy."

"Bah! a Southern fortune hunter."

"Now this is too much! You will not let me love you. You reject my overtures toward a reconciliation. You spoke, just now, of being alone in the world. Whose fault is that? With your millions you could have done many deeds of kindness, many acts of charity that would have surrounded your old age with hosts of friends and brought showers of bene-

dictions from grateful humanity upon your head. But no ! money is your god ! you have followed the mighty dollar until you have become as hard and as unyielding as the metal of which it is composed. You have no friends that are not interested ones, and now you are turning the heart of your only living relative from love to hatred towards you."

"Go to your room, girl ! I will not allow you to speak so to me. Before you go, however, understand once and for all that you shall never marry your jockey without my revealing all there is to tell to him and the world !"

"It is probably better that I should go and as the house is large enough, that we should meet as seldom as possible. I can take my meals in my own apartments hereafter, I suppose."

"Yes ; and do so until you can learn to treat me with respect."

"What is the use of treating you with respect when your unreasonable conduct has forfeited all I ever had for you ?"

And exercising the prerogative of her sex in having the last word, Natalie swept out of the room in as towering and unromantic a rage as a head-strong woman ever indulged in. It was not long before she realized that she had gone too far and said more than she intended to, but the same pride that prevented her father from acknowledging his error, prevented her from confessing, even to herself, that she was in any way in the wrong.

Left to himself, her father finished his dinner as best he might and spent his solitary evening in any-

thing but pleasing meditation. The consciousness that he had been unpardonably hasty and all wrong at the outset, so far from inspiring him with an idea of retracting his words, rather made him more obstinate, whilst the recollection of his recent stormy interview and the tirade of abuse heaped upon him by his daughter, re-awakened the fires of his anger and hatred for Breckenridge.

This mood continued all through the evening and when the next day, A. Corvus Jones sent his card and speedily followed it in person, his resolution was taken.

"Well, can you do anything that will change the condition of affairs in Kentucky?" asked the huge speculator.

"No. I don't believe I could gain the good will of that horse-jockey if I were to try and I know that I would not if I could."

"Well, you know your own business I suppose. If things are as you seem to indicate between you, he will see his chance to knife you and will do it. It was a good scheme, but like many other, fails from some unforeseen combination."

"You abandon it?"

"Most certainly. I am an idle man, but I can't waste money as well as time fighting, when the odds are so much against me."

"Do you mean to say that one man can frighten you like that?"

"When one man holds the balance of power like this, yes. The question is evenly divided and we want to obtain something. If the opposition were

attacking and we defending, it would be different; but they have the strength of position and strongest army too. To fight further would be folly."

"Well, it must be abandoned. Fortunately it had not cost so very much."

"Oh, no, the money spent amounts to but little. I don't much like to look on the weeks wasted in fixing' the Legislature which after all wasn't 'fixed.' But we cannot always succeed. So let it go."

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was several days before Frank Manly found an opportunity to visit Louisville, and in the meantime his thoughts were far from pleasant. He shrank from writing to Heloise on the subject. His letters, when he mentioned the matter, were so cold or so stern, or else so weak, that he destroyed them and wrote without alluding to it in any way. Finally, however, he found time, and taking the afternoon train went to Louisville.

Together at last, Frank and Heloise indulged in the luxury of a lover-like greeting, and some time was passed in that pleasing occupation.

Presently, however, the object of his visit intruded itself upon Frank's mind. He turned suddenly and almost sternly, in his chair and looked her full in the face.

"Heloise," he said, with marked decision in his tone, "I met Charlie Duncan on the cars going home, the last time I was here."

His tone and bearing told Heloise that all was discovered, and her heart sank like a lump of lead. She was too good an actress to betray herself, however, so she simply said:

"Did you? That must have made your trip shorter. Did he tell you any news?"

"Yes, unexpected news to me. He told me that he and Jean MacDonald are not engaged."

"Is *that* so! What broke it off?"

"He said that he never was engaged to her."

"Well, that's funny. Seems to have been a divergence of ideas between the two parties. He said he was not, Jean said she was. I wonder which knew best?"

"Jean told *me* she never was engaged or even had a flirtation with Charles Duncan."

His tone had now grown so stern that it would have been foolish not to have recognized the fact.

Heloise changed her rôle and asked sarcastically:

"And you tell me this in the tone of a mentor? Will you please say just what you mean?"

"I mean that there is an inconsistency between what you told me at Lexington and what the two parties most interested assert in the matter."

"Ah, indeed, and you suspect me of having deceived you at that time?"

"I would like to have an explanation of the inconsistency."

"Ah, you would! Well, suppose I become an interrogator first. You think I deceived you at that time?"

"I simply say, I would like to understand."

"We'll waive that! Will you kindly tell me what object I could have had in doing so?"

This home thrust staggered Frank completely. He could not answer; for the only reason she could have had was the one that he of all men could not openly speak of.

“ You think that for the sake of winning your good graces, I have stooped to lie. I suppose you will add that I followed you to your home and hunted you down, until at last I caught you. Your modesty, Mr. Manly, is only exceeded by your perspicacity.”

“ Why, Heloise ! I never said, never dreamed of such a thing ! I just wanted to know how such a contradiction should come about.”

“ And you come to me with an air of a grand seigneur and demand an explanation of me ! Do you recollect what it was I said ? ”

“ You said that Jean told you she had been engaged to Charlie Duncan.”

“ Exactly ! And Jean told you she was not. Now that means there were three chances given for a lie. Jean might have lied when she told you. I might have lied when I told you, and Jean might have lied when she told me.”

“ When she told you ? ”

“ Yes, Charlie Duncan was attentive to me. She might have wanted his attentions and told me, so that I would not interfere with them. If that be so her scheme miscarried and she did not get the lover of her choice, after all.”

“ But do you think Jean Macdonald would ? ”

“ Oh, no. I prefer to think that Heloise Churchill would manufacture a transparent lie for the sole and only purpose of securing a smile from Lord Manly.”

“ Heloise, I see I have been hasty. You will understand how I——”

“ I will understand that when the issue between two women arose, in which one of them must have

lied, you suspected the woman you professed to love. If your opinion of me is so low as that, I don't see how you can have either love or respect for me. Here, take back your ring, since your love is not with it. I little dreamed when you gave it me that night in the old country house, where I was so happy, that in a few short weeks you would—would prove so—so—cruel—and—and—doubt—and—treat—me—as—as—you ha—a—a—ve.” And having bluffed him into complete silence, she proceeded to burst into a flood of tears, that were not all affected.

This volley of tears completed the victory, and routed poor Frank, horse, foot, and dragoons. He fell on his knees before her, and implored her forgiveness; called himself a brute and coward, several choice varieties of idiots, fools, etc., and finished by swearing that nothing in the future could ever make him doubt her. No, not a shining angel coming down for the sole purpose of accusing her.

She finally allowed him to console her and to steal an arm around her waist; and at last she permitted him to kiss her, but she allowed it only; she was still markedly cold.

“What is it, darling?” he asked, “what more can I say?”

“Oh, nothing! I suppose it's natural.”

“What is natural? What do you mean?”

“Oh, I don't see what an engaged man wants to go visiting other girls for. But I suppose, man-like, they must amuse themselves.”

“But I found John Sound here when I came.

“He came to see me; I did not seek him. Besides,

a young lady in society is different. Receiving calls is part of her business."

"And a young man of society?"

"Oh, I don't want to think of you as that. You are too much of a man to be so wrapped up in society. Of course, there's no harm in it; but I don't see why you want to go to see any girl, and especially the girl you were so attentive to when I came up last fall."

"And whom you cut completely out, eh? Well, my darling, it is very little to me, and if you don't want me to, I will never visit at the MacDonald's again."

Two round arms were about him like a flash, two warm lips were pressed to his; and, completely reconciled, the happy lovers sat late into the night and indulged in the usual intellectual conversation common to such occasions.

CHAPTER XXV.

"OH, Ransom ! isn't it perfectly lovely ?"

"It is, indeed. We have taken our journey round the world as one would take a dinner—the sweets for the last."

"But you forget; we still have San Francisco and the Rocky Mountains, Big Trees and so forth, after this."

"Oh, they will be coffee and cigars, I suppose."

"A most ambiguous compliment."

"Greater from my standpoint than yours, I dare say. But don't let us lose this sight."

It was indeed worth looking at. An English steamer was just entering the bay of Yeddo, winding its way through the channel that enters the bay proper, and which was sufficiently narrow to allow objects on either bank to be distinctly seen. The low, one-story fishermen's huts, built in straggling groups along the sloping shores, with their picturesque inmates passing in and out; the background of abrupt declivities, covered with Oriental verdure, odd-looking trees, familiar enough in pictures, but strange to the sight as Nature's products; tall rank grass forcing itself everywhere, and here and there pools of stagnant water, covered with lotus flowers and peopled by storks, cranes, or wild geese,

gave the whole landscape more the appearance of an elaborate "stage set" to be used in a spectacular production than the actual handiwork of Nature.

This sense of unreality remains with the traveler always in Japan. The costumes, customs, and people are so different from anything one finds elsewhere, that it is hard to believe these kindly, intellectual people really have been doing such absurd-looking things for centuries. Occasionally, it is true, the idea may arise that these intellectual people—for they most distinctly are that—may regard certain perfectly conventional procedures on one's own part as highly absurd, but it passes away and one soon begins again to regard them as performers for his amusement.

"Oh, look there! I have seen that picture on a dozen fans at least."

"That picture," was a view of Fuji-Yama, the most perfect mountain in the world, rising straight from a surrounding plateau, with no adjacent peaks, and almost geometrically conical. The summit of "Fuji-Sama," as the natives respectfully speak of their venerated mountain, was still snow-capped, and across the cone-shaped top a narrow band of clouds floated. And as they gazed, a flock of wild geese winged their graceful flight between the mountain top and their line of vision.

"You are right there, Mrs. Randolph," said a tall, slender traveler near her. "You have the two favorite subjects for Japanese artists of whatever calibre or whatever age. Fuji-Yama, with his night-cap on and the flight of wild geese, has been and will continue to be represented in all works of art, from fans up."

“Ah, Captain Douglas, this is not your first view, is it?”

“No, nor my twentieth. I am a good deal of a nomad. Wander most of my time, but I always come back to the Land of the Rising Sun. I am too restless to stay long, but I must come back.”

“What makes you such a wanderer?”

“Oh, a hereditary tendency indulged until it has become a mastering passion. I never met but one man who excelled me; but by Jove! he made me seem like a domestic paragon.”

“Indeed! who was he?” Margie asked, listlessly, more to keep up the conversation than anything else.

“A countryman of yours, by-the-by; his name was Tarleton, George or Henry. I don’t remember his first name, but he was a good one to go and no mistake. Why, just fancy! I met him in Australia some six months ago and tried to keep up with him, sight-seeing; but he wore me out in ten days, and I am pretty good myself, let me tell you. Well, he left me and I wandered on up to Calcutta, when who should turn up but my American, who, in the meantime, had ‘done’ the Caucasian Mountains and Thibet. Oh, he beats the world, I can assure you! And the queer part of it is he never rests at night. On the go all day and hunts for a lark at night. If he can’t find one, he falls to reading all night sometimes. Some one said the other day that he had never met a man so well posted on abstruse subjects as that Kentuckian.”

“Kentuckian? Is he from that State?”

"Yes, I believe so. But he don't talk much about himself. Awfully good company though, when he has had enough absinthe."

"A drunkard?"

"No; for no matter how much he drinks, and he drinks a lot, it never seems to affect him. Just goes ahead with that queer tired smile on his face. Tells most excruciating stories and says things that you think about next day and find they were awfully funny, don't you know? But he never seems to think they are at all amusing. He's a rum lot, any way, but a good chap for all that."

They steamed slowly up the bay watching the beautiful landscape as it unfolded in a thousand picturesque variations, and the native fishermen in their sampans as they stood up and sculled along—in this, as in everything else, differing from anything home-like.

"I say, Randolph, if you find time, drop around to the club. I am a member and will put you down. Just get in a 'jin-rick-sha' and say '*go ban*' to the coolie. He will take you there as fast as his legs will carry."

"Thank you. I will avail myself of your invitation. I am anxious to see what sort of people live here, white as well as native."

"You will find them a queer lot and, for that matter, a jolly lot. They live so isolated from the world that they allow their individual eccentricities full sway. You will meet some odd customers."

Several days passed in sight seeing. Margie did much shopping and Randolph availed himself of

Douglas's invitation to visit the club freely. It was at this place that he formed the acquaintance of a physician whose general information and social qualities rendered him a most pleasing companion. The two soon became warm friends, passing hours at a time over a game of chess, at which they were very evenly matched.

"By-the-way, I have one of the most interesting patients now that it was ever my fortune to attend," said the doctor one day, as they sat at their favorite pastime.

"Indeed, who is he? or perhaps, I should say 'she', since you evince so much interest."

"Oh, no, she's a he," laughed the doctor, "a countryman of ours named Tarleton."

"George Tarleton?"

"Yes, do you know him?"

"Oh, no. I heard Douglas speak of him."

"Every one who has met him remembers him."

"What is there so remarkable about him?"

"To you or an unprofessional man, his brilliant if erratic mind, his conversational powers, his unflagging chase of pleasure in all its phases; to me his diseased mental and physical condition."

"He is insane, then?"

"Not exactly that, but he has something on his mind which never lets him rest day or night."

"Nahnies!" the last word was addressed to his "boy," who stood bowing and sucking in his breath with a sharp sound, which is the manner indicating respect among the coolies. The servant advanced and handed the doctor a "chit," or note, which, after

apologizing to his companion, he opened and read.

"Why, this is most extraordinary!" he exclaimed, "You told me you did not know Tarleton."

"Never saw him in my life. Why?"

"Read for yourself."

Randolph took the paper from the physician's hand, and with a puzzled look, which grew to be one of amazement, read:

"Dear Doctor:

"The time has finally come. I can't last many hours and want to see you before it is all over. If you should happen to know of the whereabouts of Mr. Ransom Randolph and can find him in time, I would like to see him before I die. He would not refuse a dying man, even though the name be unfamiliar. Attend to this matter for me, my friend; it is probably the last favor I shall ask on earth."

Sincerely,

TARLETON."

"It is very strange," muttered Randolph.

"Will you go?"

"Of course, only let me send a 'chit' to my wife to prevent her from being uneasy."

"All right! but lose no time. When a man in his fix does die, he usually takes very little time to do it in."

They were soon ready and were whirling along in "rick-shas" to the house where the sick man lay.

They stopped in front of a Japanese house, situated on the side of the "bluff," and dismounting, passed

through a beautiful little bit of landscape garden and walked to the entrance; where, after removing their shoes, according to the custom of the country, they pushed back the sliding door and entered, their shoeless feet making no noise on the heavily matted floors.

In a wide, breezy room, dressed in pajamas and lying on a rich "f'trai" lay the emaciated figure of a white man. His hair and beard were long and streaked with gray. Out of their deep caverns two burning eyes seemed to gleam and flicker like the phosphorescent light of a "will-o-the-wisp."

Noiseless as their entrance had been, the sick man heard it; for he turned at once.

"Ah, Doctor! you are prompt. Who is that with you?"

"Mr. Randolph, as your note requested."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Randolph. You will pardon my not rising, of course, and excuse me if I ask you some questions."

"Certainly. I am entirely at your service."

"Are you the Mr. Randolph who visited Louisville in company with Captain Breckenridge last autumn?"

"I am." The Virginian suppressed all evidence of surprise, for the man was rapidly growing weak.

"Are you a friend of Captain Breckenridge?"

"Probably the closest friend he has."

"That is enough. Wick Breckenridge never made a friend of a man who was unworthy of his confidence. I would trust his judgment in anything—I must trust it now. Doctor," he said, turning to the physician, "I have something that I must say to this

gentleman. Give me a stimulant, double strength, for my time is growing very short."

This was so apparent, that the other, without a word, complied.

"And now, my friend, leave us, won't you? and see that no one is within ear-shot?"

"Certainly."

"Thank you. You have been a real friend to me."

He took the doctor's hand in his, pressed it cordially and motioned for him to leave. The physician complied and Randolph was alone with this mysterious American, of whom he had heard so much.

"I saw your arrival announced in the 'Japan Mail,' and have prepared for this event, which I knew must come to pass."

"Believe me, any service I can be to you, I shall most cheerfully perform. If you want your friends in Kentucky——"

"Neither to my friends in Kentucky, nor to any human being, save one, must my fate or my real name be known."

"Your real name! Is it not Tarleton, then?"

"That is only a part of it. I am Tarleton Mayhew."

"Tarleton Mayhew!" gasped Randolph.

"I see you remember my name which I hardly expected. I went very little into social life during your visit and so did not meet you. But to the point. I want to ask you if you will forward these papers to the address indicated and add a note saying that you had seen me here dying, and that my last words and last thoughts were forgiveness and—and love——"

The Virginian glanced at the address and read,

“Alice Jones,

El Paso, Texas.”

“That also is an assumed name,” said the dying man. “It is the address of my wife.” The words came with a violent effort from his lips, accompanied by such a distortion of countenance that Randolph made a hasty motion of assistance; but he was checked by a gesture.

“I have more to say. Do you know the story of my disgrace?”

The Virginian nodded without speaking.

“That saves time. What do you know of the death of—*that—man*?” again a violent contortion crossed the face upon which death had already set his seal.

“I know that his dead body was found in an obscure cabin in the wilds of Canada and that the cause of his death was never known!”

“But did you suspect?”

“I had my own theory,” said Randolph, evasively.

“Did you suspect that *I* tracked him from place to place, having him at my mercy for weeks, and, rolling the delicious morsel of revenge under my tongue, playing with him as a cat does with a mouse, enjoying in contemplation a thousand times that which I had planned to do. Did you suspect that I drugged, bound and poisoned him? aye,”—his voice was raised and his manner excited,—“and stood by and saw him cringe and writhe in his agony; yes, and taunted him with his treachery to me and his un-

manly, cowardly fears; saw him grovel at my feet, and whine and beg for mercy he could not hope for? Did you suspect that?"

"My God! how unutterably horrible! And all this wandering, restless life and friendless death is the fruit of your remorse?"

"*Remorse!* NO!"—the voice was loud and firm now. "Remorse for killing a viper, a rattlesnake? No, a thousand times no! It is the one source of comfort, the one oasis in the black despair of my life. The yells of that dying hyena have made sweetest music in my ears, and come back to me now, making my dying hour easier with the certainty of complete revenge."

"What then has driven you to be an exile and a wanderer? It could not have been fear of the law, for no pursuit was attempted, no real suspicion aroused."

The entire demeanor of the dying man changed.

"It was *love*," he said, his face taking on a look of such abject despair that the tears involuntarily sprang into Randolph's eyes.

"Love!" repeated the latter, surprised.

"Yes, love for my wife. I loved her with all the ardor of my nature. She never understood, or if she did, never valued it. She threw it away as lightly as she would a faded flower, but I worshipped her. She dragged a name that had descended to me untarnished for generations, through the mire. She trampled my heart under her feet, but I loved her, my God, how I loved her! how I still love her! Day and night her face is before me, her voice sounds in

my ears. I sleep to dream of her, and waking, find the mockery of the dream intensifies my agony. But I love her! I love her! Norah, my wife, Norah! All is forgiven, forgotten, Norah, I ——”

He fell back on the matting, gasped once or twice, and the tempest-tossed soul found rest at last.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NATALIE PEGRAM felt herself growing more and more unhappy every day. Her position was becoming intolerable. She never saw her father now at all, and she knew the iron will, of which he was so proud, too well to imagine for a moment that he would yield. On the other hand she was separated from her lover in a way that bid fair to be permanent. Since she had nursed him back to life in New Orleans, he had seemed to belong to her. Somehow she was conscious of a different sort of feeling from that which she had entertained for him before that period.

And so she sat and meditated, and worried and grew more and more unhappy. To people of her temperament, that state of mind is perilous as well as unbearable; anything is preferable. And so one day she took a great resolution. She sat down and wrote a request for him to come and see her at her own home, setting an hour, however, when she knew her father would be at his office.

Wicklyffe Breckenridge received this letter in his home, near Lexington, pretty much as a man might receive a legacy from some hitherto unknown relative—with profound surprise and unbounded delight. He, too, had been suffering from a canker-worm at his heart-strings, for he realized how utterly useless life had become to him without Natalie. And though

he refrained from distressing her by too many complaints, every line he wrote her showed his desolation.

It may be imagined that he lost no time in complying with her request, taking the very first train for New York, as she knew he would, and going immediately to her house at the hour indicated.

Seated in a luxurious chair and dressed in a charming tea gown, he found Natalie awaiting him. He noticed with anxiety her pale cheeks and hollow eyes, and as he fondly stroked the soft hair from her temples, asked rather tremulously after her health.

"Oh, I am very well," she said, "but worried and distressed. I have something to say to you which I do not like to say, which I would give worlds not to say, and it is wearing me out thinking about it."

"Then, my darling Natalie, don't say it," said he, cheerfully. "There is nothing you need to say to me. That which you do not choose to tell, I am content not to know. Where my love goes, there goes my blind, unquestioning confidence."

"I know, dear. I know perfectly well; but I have a reason why I must tell you."

"And that is—?"

"I will tell you my reason when I have told you the story. It is a very long, painful story. I scarce know how to begin."

"Again I say, do not tell me, unless you think it best."

"I *must* tell you. You have been so trusting, so kind, so noble, I have treated you shamefully in not telling you sooner."

“Don’t let any such feelings——”

“Hush!” she said, placing her finger on his lips. “I must, I will say it; so let me go on. But put your arm round me, dear, and let me feel its strong clasp encouraging me, for my task is a hard one.”

He said no more, but took her in his great strong arms, and held her so all through her story.

“It is about my mother,” she said, making the strongest effort and commencing abruptly. “She was the daughter of an old sea captain in Massachusetts. He made a great deal of money at whaling, and sent his daughter to New York to be educated. She was an innocent, unsuspecting country girl, who had never been away from her mother’s apron string, and as guileless as a baby. After she had been in this city for a few months, she formed the acquaintance of a handsome stranger, and completely lost her heart to him. He found out all about her and her father’s great wealth, and as she was fascinated with him, he had no difficulty in persuading her to a secret wedding. Accordingly, she left her school on some plausible pretext, and she and Martin Stuyvesant were married in the presence of only two witnesses. Imagine her horror, two days later, on reading in the daily papers an account of a daring burglary and the capture of two criminals in the very act, for the name of one of the burglars was Martin Stuyvesant and the other one of the witnesses of her wedding. For weeks she was in torment, fearing he would announce his marriage in the hope of securing powerful assistance. But, much to her surprise, and greatly to her relief, he did not do so, allowing him-

self to be tried and convicted, without making an especial effort to save himself. He was sentenced to a long term in State Prison, and went at once to serve it, without application for a new trial or any of the last efforts that convicted criminals usually resort to.

“In the penitentiary,” continued Natalie, drawing her breath quickly, “his conduct was so exemplary that he was made a ‘trustee,’ and given lighter and more agreeable work, which his superior education fitted him very well to do—some sort of clerical work, I believe. About this time the war of the Rebellion commenced, and the Governor began pardoning those of the convicts whose conduct had been exemplary and who would agree to immediately volunteer. Among the first to avail themselves of this opportunity were Martin Stuyvesant and his fellow criminal. They enlisted and were sent at once to the front on the eve of a great battle—I have forgotten which. Their regiment was in the hottest of the fight and suffered very severely. A long list of killed and wounded was published, and under the first heading appeared the names of the two convicts. My mother, who, after learning the true character of the man she had married, had long ago ceased to feel any sentiment save aversion for him, coupled always with the fear that he might claim her after his release from prison, experienced the profoundest sensation of relief. It was as though a millstone had been removed from her heart. Stuyvesant and his companion dead, there were only two persons living who knew of her marriage, the clergyman who performed

the ceremony, and a wild classmate of hers named Louise Montague. It was through this girl she had met Stuyvesant, and her influence over the unsophisticated country girl had mainly brought about the act of folly she committed. Trusting, therefore, to Miss Montague's silence, which she could the more readily do as she was a Western girl and had gone home, my mother determined to let the marriage remain forever a secret.

"About this time," continued Natalie, "my grandfather—her father—had some transactions of considerable moment with my father, in the course of which a friendship was formed between the two. My father became a welcome guest at the house, where, from talking business to the father, he soon changed to making love to the daughter. He was a young man of great force of character, steady habits and was rapidly making a name in the commercial world. His suit met with my grandfather's approval, and he urged his daughter to consider it favorably. Her imagination was pleased with the ardent wooing of a man whom she saw was already bending people to his will. She consented. They were married with great ceremony. Some ten years passed, during which they lived together with a reasonable amount of contentment. My father's domineering temper, however, asserted itself everywhere, but more especially at home. He made his wife fear, rather than love him; but he was liberal to her in a financial way, and if they did not live in perfect harmony, they at least kept from very serious quarrels. It was at this time that a stranger called at their home, sending up word

to my mother that he was an old friend of her college days. Imagine her horror at confronting Martin Stuyvesant. He had not been killed, but in the thick of the fight had been knocked down by the wind of a passing cannon ball. On recovering he found that the tide of battle had swept on, and that he was in the enemy's lines. Utterly unprincipled in all things, it made little difference to him which side he fought on, and he deserted to the Confederate army. In course of time he became thoroughly tired of the hard work and harder fighting that constituted a Southern soldier's life, and watching his opportunity when in Richmond, he one day shipped aboard a "blockade runner," and sailed in her for England. Her enterprise was successful, and Stuyvesant, a deserter from both armies, gave this country a wide berth.

"He wandered about, leading an idle, adventurous life, until he thought it safe for him to return to this country. This he did, and accidentally met Louise Montague, whose early wildness had developed into something worse, for she had become an outcast. From her he learned of his wife's second marriage and place of residence.

"My mother listened to this long story," said Natalie, "in a state of mind bordering on madness. This man, whom she believed to be dead and for whom she had conceived a loathing, was her husband! She must leave her luxurious home, give up her social position, abandon everything dear to a woman's heart, and taking her young daughter, must follow this brute, this wretch, whose every act had

shown him to be utterly devoid of manhood or principle, and whose bloated face and worn attire proclaimed him to be a drunkard. It would have been hard to have given up all for a man she loved, but for this beast, it was intolerable! It was while in this state of mind, and torn by these contending emotions, that the man before her made her a proposition. She was rich, he said, and he poor. He could not support her and did not want to be hard on her. If she would give him enough to live on and to keep Louise Montague's mouth shut, he would say nothing about their marriage, and the world would be none the wiser. The temptation came to her in the first shock of her fright and agony. On the one side disgrace, poverty, degradation, and such a companion! On the other, all the luxury with which she was surrounded, and which had become second nature to her. It was wrong, it was weak, it was wicked, but oh, Wick, my darling, she yielded."

And Natalie who had been speaking very rapidly and controlling her agitation with all the strength of her will, lost her self-command and burst into a spasm of hysterical weeping, for the second time in her life.

Captain Breckenridge, whose strong clasp had never weakened during this long recital, now tightened it, and stroking her soft hair, poured a world of sympathy and tenderness into her ear, and with caresses and endearing words, soothed her into something approaching calm.

"Do not try to tell me more now," he said, tenderly.

"Yes, let me go on—let me finish. It will be easier now than at another time, and I must tell you all."

"Very well, darling, but take your time. Do not so excite yourself."

"Thank you, dear. The rest is soon told. My mother in consenting to this scheme, made herself the slave of as base a scoundrel as ever lived, and he used his advantage freely. Every available dollar that she could secure without arousing her husband's suspicions, went into his pocket, to be spent in vile debauchery. His companion, the witness of the marriage, died from the effects of dissipation, but her death was carefully concealed from my mother."

"The end came at length," continued Natalie in a choked voice.

"Harassed and nagged at by my father, black-mailed and threatened by Stuyvesant, her brain gave way. She dropped dead one morning of apoplexy."

The sobs were swelling up in her throat again, but she conquered them and went on with the same force of will that she had exhibited all through.

"It was the very irony of fate that Martin Stuyvesant was shot in a drunken brawl in a Mott Street opium den, on the afternoon of the sudden death of my mother. After her death my father found some of his black-mailing letters to her which proved to him clearly enough, that his wife had had a living husband at the time he married her, who had outlived her, and that consequently his marriage had been illegal, and I—oh Wick, how can I ever look you in the face again?—I am illegitimate."

“Why, my darling! why should you avoid meeting my eye? You cannot be blamed for your mother’s fault, and she—well she was weak at the last, but entirely blameless at first.”

“Look me straight in the face, Wicklyffe Breckenridge,” cried Natalie springing suddenly from his arms and facing him, “and answer me on your hope of your soul’s salvation. Do you tell me that you love me none the less for what I have told you, and are willing to take an illegitimate daughter as a bride to your ancestral home?”

“As solemnly as I know how to say it, I assure you that I do not love you one whit the less for what you have said, and that now, as ever since I met you at White Sulphur, the one wish of my heart, the crowning glory of my life will be to have you come to my lonely home and make life a long summer day to me.”

“Do you want me so badly as that?”

“Every pulsation of my heart, every fibre of my nerves, every thought of my brain calls out for you to come to me. My darling, my loved one!”

“Then take me whenever you will!” she cried, flinging herself into his arms in the entire abandonment of unutterable love.

“Natalie! you mean that?”

“Yes, I am yours when you will take me”

“My own, my wife!”

When Captain Breckenridge took his leave at the door, he almost ran over Nathaniel Pegram.

Had Pegram seen a ghost he could not have been more thoroughly startled. He even rubbed his eyes

to assure himself that it was no fantastic creation of his brain.

“ You here ! ” he exclaimed.

“ Good afternoon, Mr. Pegram,” said the Kentuckian, quietly.

“ What the devil are you doing here ? ” thundered Pegram.

“ I have just been calling on Miss Pegram,” answered Wick, with the same quiet politeness.

“ You have eh ? And by what authority ? ”

“ I don’t generally relate the contents of notes received from young ladies, but I will make an exception in this case. I came in response to an invitation sent me by Miss Pegram.”

“ You are an impudent liar.”

The captain sprang forward like a lion, his whole face suffused, his eyes flaming. But with a mighty effort he commanded himself and answered in even tones whose depth alone evinced emotion:

“ You are an old man, Natalie’s father, and in your own house, three good reasons for not resenting a speech such as I never thought I should allow to pass unnoticed.”

“ How dare you show your face in my house after I had you ejected from my office ? ”

“ I think your memory a little deficient. Tried to have me ejected, perhaps, but did not succeed ! ”

His cold, contemptuous tones seemed to irritate the old man beyond reason.

“ Here, Thomas, Clarkson, some of you, all of you,” he cried, choking with rage, “ put this person out ! Do you hear ? Put him out, I say ! ”

Several flunkies came running in response to their master's commands ; but paused aghast at this most unexpected order. The powerful frame and stern eye of the Kentuckian were very plausible reasons for hesitation.

" Stop ! " came a clear, firm voice, and Natalie stepped from the room, where Wick had but recently left her, into the hall.

" Thomas," she said, " this gentleman is a friend of mine. Do not pay any attention to my father's orders. He is not responsible for what he says just now, and will regret it to-morrow."

The flunkies, glad enough to be relieved of so disagreeable a dilemma, fell back in respectful silence, whilst Nathaniel Pegram, actually speechless with surprise and rage, stood staring from one to another.

" I think it is perhaps only fair to tell you that I shall call to-morrow at half-past ten o'clock for the purpose of taking your daughter to a clergyman and being married," said Wick, still in that ever suppressed, deep voice.

" What did you say ? " asked Pegram, almost wildly, in his bewilderment.

" I said I intend to call to-morrow at exactly half-past ten and claim your daughter as my bride."

" Elope with my daughter ? "

" No sir ! " thundered the captain. " Not elope, I will come openly, in broad daylight and *take* her. Let him stop me who can."

" How dare you stand here in my own house and tell me that to my face ! " stuttered the old man.

" Because it is true ! Is it not, Natalie ? "

“ Yes, Wick.”

“ Oh, it is you, you baggage ! And don’t you fear some one may tell your ‘ Wick ’ the history of a certain Mrs. Stuyvesant ? ”

“ I have told him.”

“ You did not dare to tell—”

“ Natalie has told me the story of that much tempted and most unfortunate of women,” said the captain. “ She was more sinned against than sinning and expiated her fault by her great suffering.”

“ And you will marry her after that ? ”

“ As I already informed you, I shall call to-morrow morning to claim my bride. The interview has been already too prolonged. Good-afternoon, Mr. Pegram. Natalie, my darling, I shall come for you at half-past ten. Do not fail to be ready.”

“ I shall not fail you, dear. *Au revoir.*”

Before Pegram could recover from his enraged stupor, Captain Breckenridge had walked calmly out and closed the door behind him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON a quiet street in El Paso, in a little cottage, a fair woman sits sewing. She is dressed in the plainest attire, with no evidence of ornament about her save, the neat collar and cuffs of snowy linen. She is working patiently, wearily, when a sharp knock at the door startles her.

"Letter and registered package for Mrs. Alice Jones."

"I am she, but who can they be from?"

The postman made no answer to this obviously idle question, but delivered the package and left.

The Japanese postmark and unfamiliar handwriting of the address puzzled her still more. She opened the letter first, and almost fainted at the first word.

The letter was as follows :

"My Dear Mrs. Mayhew :

In accordance with the last wishes of a dying man, I write you and send by same mail a package previously sealed by him and addressed to you.

Your husband, Tarleton Mayhew, died in my arms. His last thoughts were of you. His last words, expressive of forgiveness.

Never in my experience have I known of a truer and deeper love than he evinced for you. Your name was on his lips as he died.

I refrain from conventional condolence, merely assuring you of my deepest sympathy.

Very sincerely,

RANSOM RANDOLPH."

Yokohoma, June —, 18—.

The final words of the letter were blotted by her tears, which fell thick and fast.

It was sometime before she could summon self-command enough to open the heavy package that accompanied the letter. The first thing that met her view was a bundle of bonds and certificates, amounting to a large sum. Accompanying these were formal notification from the American Consular office, in Yokohama, of the death of her husband, and a copy of his will. There were a few other papers of more or less legal character, and then she came to the package sealed with her husband's signet and addressed to Mrs. Alice Jones.

It was a diary, dating from the day of her flight to within three days of his death and gave the details of his pursuit and vengeance, and of his subsequent wanderings. It made a bulky package, for not one day was missed, and of all those records, there was not one which did not conclude with some evidence of his great love for her.

She read far into the night, poring over the sad pages with a deep and melancholy interest. She had never understood her husband. She had very much

under-estimated his nobility of character, and had considered him a cold book-worm, more interested in scientific investigation than in living persons and passing events. His sensitive shrinking from expressing a love he felt was unreciprocated, she had wholly misapprehended, and she finished by holding him in very light esteem, almost contempt. As she read, however, the outpourings of his great passion, saw the real strength of his nature, and understood the mighty struggle of contending emotions which had gone on in his heart, it all came like a revelation to her, and she realized what a man she had neglected, despised and finally crushed with her frivolity.

A great change came over her in that long sleepless night. Having finished his diary, she sat and gazed out into the clear starlight canopy. She who had despised him living, loved him dead. A feeling, hard to describe, came into her heart, and she knew that henceforth, forevermore, her soul was consecrated to his memory.

The early morning found her still sitting looking out of the window.

The amount left her by her husband was large enough to enable her to select her own mode of life, and she determined what that was to be. She entered no religious order, took no vow ; but her face, grown grave and earnest now, became a welcome visitor in many homes of sickness and misery. Unostentatious in her charities, unassuming in her acts of mercy, she passed the remainder of her days in making her atonement. And she, too, kept a diary ; for on her death, which occurred some years later in a plague-

stricken city, whither she had gone to nurse the sick and relieve the needy, one was found in her bosom, and every day there was mentioned the name of her misunderstood and much injured husband.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CAPTAIN BRECKENRIDGE was up early on the morning of the day following his visit to Natalie and the stormy scene with her father. He busied himself making preliminary arrangements for the wedding, and was wondering how he was to pass the short interval before he called for his bride, when in the rotunda of his hotel he met old Colonel Churchill, Heloise's father.

"Going to be busy this morning?" he asked the colonel, rather nervously, after a cordial greeting.

"No; I have nothing to do before two o'clock. Why?"

"Oh, nothing! That is, I am going to be married this morning, and would like you to witness the ceremony."

"And he calls that nothing! Just incidentally expects to drop in somewhere and casually get married, if the weather is fine!" laughed the genial old lawyer, who dearly loved his little joke.

Wick laughed too, but a little uneasily, and explained the situation. The old Kentuckian's eyes gleamed as he heard of the captain's determination to call for and take his bride, willy-nilly.

"Go with you?" he cried. "I would not miss it for the world. I'll stand by you through thick and thin, you can rest assured! Come on!"

They stepped into the carriage and were driven to the house.

"No use in getting yourself mixed up in the row that's coming," said the captain. "Just wait outside. I don't think I'll be urged to stay a very long time."

"All right! You are equal to the whole of them and won't need my assistance."

Wick ascended the steps and rang the bell. The door was opened by Thomas.

"Miss Natalie ready, Thomas?" asked the captain, in his most matter-of-fact way.

"Beg pardon, sir," said Thomas, opening the door very wide, "but I has orders not to admit you into the house this morning."

"I cannot help what orders you may have. I want to see Miss Natalie," said the Kentuckian, his color rising and a dangerous gleam coming into his eye.

"Them's, my orders, sir, but of course if you was to use *force*—" and the honest eyes of the footman twinkled.

"Oh, I see! Well, stand out of my way, sir." The voice was stern, but the hand that was laid upon the footman's shoulder conveyed a bank-note into his outstretched palm first, and the pressure required to move him was of the very lightest. Pushing him unceremoniously aside, the captain stalked into the centre of the hall-way and called aloud:

"Natalie! Natalie, are you ready?"

"Yes, dear!" answered Natalie, coming, ready dressed, from an adjoining room; and walking up to her betrothed, she kissed him full in the mouth.

"Stop!" thundered a voice from the head of the stairway, and Nathaniel Pegram came excitedly down.

"Stop I say! I forbid you to go with that man!"

"And I answer that I will go whither he asks me, though all the world should cry stop!"

"You, sir! For the third time you have intruded, this time forcibly, upon my premises."

"I have little or nothing to say to you, sir. I have come for my bride and I mean to take her."

"Natalie, if you go with that man, the story of your mother's shame will be made public before night."

"Do so, if you will. I cannot make another suffer as I have done, and that other the man I love."

"All the world shall know that you haven't even a name."

"Before they can acquire that information," said Captain Breckenridge, sternly, "she will have an honored one, and it will be mine, sir! And when it is added that she is my wife, there will be few indeed who will dare offer her slight or affront. But we are wasting time. Come Natalie."

"Natalie, I forbid you."

But his words fell on empty space, for the captain had led Natalie to the door and together they passed out; the banging of the door behind them was the only answer the old man received.

He looked after them for a moment, as if dazed, made an effort to speak, gasped once or twice, grasped his collar and tore it open, then sank in a heap on the floor.

Thomas, who had been watching through the crack

of a convenient door, came immediately to his master's assistance, and calling help, conveyed him to a couch and summoned his physician in haste.

Natalie and her lover, unconscious of what had taken place, proceeded to the carriage where she was greeted warmly by the old lawyer.

They were driven to the house of a clergyman, who with a few simple words united for life the two hearts which had so loved and longed for each other.

"What are your plans now?" asked the Colonel.

"The next train leaves at six this evening. We shall take it and go straight to Lexington."

"You must not fail to come down within the next two weeks, however."

"For what reason?"

"Oh, I have enjoyed this wedding so much I am going to have one at my own house."

"Your daughter and Frank?"

"Yes; the young people have arranged it to suit themselves."

"Your daughter is much to be congratulated; almost as much as is Frank Mauly."

"Thank you! Yes, I like the young fellow. Seems to be a lad of spirit."

"He is a noble fellow. As you say, a lad of mettle and very high principles."

Just then a knock came at the door of the parlor in which this conversation took place, and Thomas, the footman, appeared, his usually imperturbable countenance wearing an anxious look.

"What is it, Thomas?" asked Natalie, with a vague feeling of alarm.

"Mr. Pegram is took bad, ma'am. He had a fit."

"Great heavens! Is it serious?"

"Dr. Griffin says he can't tell just yet, but thought it would be just as well for you to come."

"What shall I do?" she answered, turning to her husband.

"Go to him by all means," he replied. "I will wait here and you can send me word by Thomas, or come yourself, according to the exigencies of the case."

Natalie hurriedly put on her hat, and kissing her husband, followed the footman, and was driven to the home she had left under such exciting circumstances that morning. Arrived there, she found her father breathing heavily, but unconscious.

"Is it serious—fatal?" she asked of the grave-faced physician who stood at his bedside.

"Serious, yes; fatal, I doubt. One can never tell where these strokes will end. To-morrow his condition will be clearly defined, but not until then. In the meantime, no news is good news."

With mingled feelings of remorse and anxiety, Natalie despatched a note to her husband, and set about doing all she could to alleviate the condition of the suffering man.

CHAPTER XXIX.

NATHANIEL PEGRAM did not die, nor was he, indeed, very long ill. The attack had been sharp and dangerous, but the effect once over, he was out of danger, and indeed, save for a little weakness, as well as ever. He had had a suffusion of blood, serious enough to render him unconscious, and had any one of the engorged veins broken and allowed the blood to flow upon his brain, paralysis or death would have followed. But as nothing of the sort occurred, Dr. Griffin was soon able to inform his anxious daughter that all danger was past.

She accordingly dressed herself to go out, and stopped at his bedside to bid her father farewell.

"Dr. Griffin tells me that you are safe now," she said.

Now that he was no longer ill, her old feeling of resentment had returned to her, and the former cold ring was perceptible in the tones of her voice.

"And you have come to say good-bye to me?" he asked, a great shadow falling over his face.

"Yes. I must go to my husband."

"Natalie, do not leave me. I am alone in the world, and this attack proves I am growing old and feeble. Do not leave me in my old age, without a single prop for my declining years."

“Had you used that tone formerly, or made that appeal, I might have felt that my duty was with you. It is too late now. I am married, and my duty lies with my husband.”

“Oh, Natalie, my daughter! You are all I have to love, and I believe the only person I ever did love. How can you have the heart to leave me in my sickness and distress?”

“Father,” she said, seating herself beside him, and taking his hand, “it may be that we have all along misunderstood each other. It may be that I wronged you when I thought you cold, devoid even of the paternal instinct. If so, much pain would have been spared me had I known it, and perhaps I should have made a better and more dutiful daughter. But it is too late now. I have given my hand where my heart went long ago, to a man you hate. Let us part friends and remain so, though we may never meet again. In this I am obeying my duty as a wife. Again I say, if I have misjudged and misunderstood you, forgive me. And now farewell!”

She stooped over him to kiss him, but he put one arm out and drawing her to a seat on the bedside, said slowly:

“Natalie, is Captain Breckenridge within easy reach?”

“He awaits me at the hotel, and the carriage is ready for me to go to him.”

“Could you bring him here?”

“Bring him here!” She could scarcely realize that she was not dreaming.

“Yes. I have something I want to say to him.”

"Surely, father, you would not have me bring my husband here to be again affronted?"

"Send for him, child, if you think he will come. I promise you you will never regret it."

"I can send him a note. What shall I say?"

"Say simply that I have something that I would rather say than write."

Natalie hesitated, for she had never seen her father in this mood, and, as she had truly said, she did not understand him at all. However, after a moment's reflection, she went into her room and wrote the note.

Scarce half an hour elapsed ere she heard a foot-step at the door, and looking up, beheld the powerful figure of her husband.

"Wick!" she exclaimed, springing up and throwing her arms around his neck. "You have come."

"Yes. I can allow no false pride on my part to stand between you and your father. You wish to see me, Mr. Pegram?" He advanced to the centre of the room and stood erect and facing the recumbent man, as he had often faced a battery, with clear and unfaltering gaze. His tone was cold and formal.

"Yes, sir. Captain Breckenridge, when you first came into my office, I was laboring under a false impression, due to my New England education. I acted on that false impression, hastily and unwarrantably. I have had time to correct myself as to that impression, but recent business annoyances, coupled with an unfortunate temper, has made me unjust and unmanly. I want to ask you to forgive me. I want to say in the presence of my daughter, that I was wholly

wrong, ungentlemanly, and pig-headed. In all my life I never so humbled myself before, and I earnestly hope that you will believe in my sincerity."

Captain Breckenridge, who had stood like a soldier on parade, while the old man was speaking, his handsome face expressive of the profoundest astonishment, here suddenly sprang forward.

"Enough, Mr. Pegram," he cried, taking the outstretched hand of the old man in his powerful clasp. "You have said enough and more. I should accept the apology of any man couched in such terms, and from you I know the effort it costs. Let bye-gones be bye-gones."

"I thought you would pardon me," said the merchant, "and that was why I sent for you. The truth is, I don't want Nathalie to leave me and I want to talk matters over with you about it."

"Well, of course, I don't want to hurry her away under existing circumstances, but we must go in a few days."

"Can't you make it a few weeks?"

"Quite impossible. I have made arrangements for taking a partner. My superintendent is to be married next week. His father-in-law that is to be, has bought a half interest in my business and wants to make him a wedding present of it. It is too important for me to miss it, and beside Frank would want me to be present, and feel hurt if I were not."

"Frank Manly! Has he done so well?"

"Yes, he is about to marry a charming girl, an heiress too."

"Well, I am glad. His temper and mine clashed

too much for me to like him as a clerk, but I always respected and wished him well."

"Father," said Natalie, suddenly breaking in, "why can't you come to Kentucky with us? You are worn out and a little of *our* blue grass will do you good!" She glanced archly at Wick.

"Yes," said Wick, heartily, "come out and see Frank married, and then take a run up to Lexington and stop with us a while."

The old man eyed him keenly, with a surprised look on his face.

"You say that as if you meant it," he finally said.

"Of course I meant it."

"Do you really want me under your roof, after all that has happened?"

"Indeed I do! I most strongly urge it."

"Captain Breckenridge, you make me feel smaller than I ever did in my life. You are a nobler and loftier character than I believed existed in this world."

"After I have taken a man's hand in amity, old scores are completely wiped out. About this trip I may be misinformed, but—" he hesitated a little—"your affairs are a little complicated; you have not been able to look over them for several days, why not cut the whole thing for a while?"

"If for no other purpose than to meet you half way in your kindly sentiments, I will accept your invitation. My affairs are not complicated, for I have always kept my business and speculations as distinct as if they were properties of different owners. I have been pretty hard hit, it is true, but my 'store'

is still intact and I am in no danger of starving just yet."

"Well, I am heartily glad to hear it. When can you go?"

"The sooner the better."

"Then let it be to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was a gorgeous wedding that united Frank Manly and Heloise Churchill. One of the largest and handsomest churches in Louisville was literally packed with the fashion and beauty of the Falls City. The building was splendidly decorated, a profusion of rarest flowers was draped and festooned about the altar, pillars and windows.

A full orchestra added its volume to the diapason of the grand organ in Mendelsohn's Wedding March, as the wide doors of the church swung open and the bridal party entered, and moved slowly to the altar, where the imposing form of the Bishop of Kentucky, supported on either side by an assisting clergyman, stood waiting to receive it.

A stir ran through the crowded throng, followed by the suppressed whispering of hundreds of feminine lips.

"Here they come!"

"Oh! isn't she a lovely bride?"

"Eight bridesmaids and none of them in white."

"Just *look* at the lace on that dress! It's worth a fortune a yard."

A few days after the wedding the two young couples, accompanied by the fathers of the brides, made preparation to leave for Lexington, where they were to spend the double honey-moon, in lieu of the usually more extended tour. As Heloise passed from her boudoir, where she had exchanged her bridal robe for a neat and most becoming traveling suit, she paused for a moment to indulge in a characteristic colloquy with her image in the mirror.

"Mrs. Manly, accept my congratulations and best wishes for your future, and may innocence and truth be always so rewarded. But my dear madame"—and the satirical smile faded from her lips and a very serious expression took its place—"as I may not have an opportunity of another confidential interview with you for some time, let me give you a serious piece of advice. Any woman can fool a man, consequently you will be able to fool your husband; but, my dear Mrs. Frank Manly, you cannot fool *with* him. He is not a man to be trifled with, my dear, I can assure you, and——"

"Why, Heloise, what on earth are you doing?" said a voice at the door.

"Why, Frank, how you frightened me! I was indulging in a habit I have had since childhood. I was talking to the only person I ever met, whom I could absolutely trust, and the only confidant I ever had, and there she is!"

He had come close behind her as she spoke, and put both arms around her.

"You have some one else to trust and confide in

now, my little wife! Don't make me jealous by having secrets for her which you keep from me."

"No, my darling husband! I never will."

And being a level-headed young woman, who knew and loved her husband, she never did.

On the following day the party met by agreement and started out on a tour of the two farms, and to indulge in that recreation of which the true Kentuckian never seems to tire, looking at the horses."

"A perfect day, a glorious country!" exclaimed Nathaniel Pegram, as they turned from viewing the lot of clean-limbed beauties. "What a relief after the turmoil and strife of Wall Street! How I hate the idea of going back to the crowded struggling city! How my old head will throb when I begin again!"

"Why should you begin again? or, at least, why go back to New York at all?" asked Wick, "Why not stay out here altogether?"

"Impossible! My interests are there.

"Why not make your greatest interest out here?"

"I don't understand you."

"Simply this. The vote has not been taken on the charter for your new railroad, and I believe it will pass."

"But Jones gave up and went home."

"Because Jones went off without understanding my position or that of a number of members of the Legislature, is no reason why you should give it up. There has been so much talk about bribery, foreign capital, and the rest of it, that those who thought favorably of the bill hesitated to say so, until they

had made a more thorough investigation. A number of them, especially those from this section of the country, are now satisfied that the bill is very much to our interest, and I am now confident we can pass it."

"You will favor it and help it?"

"With all my heart."

"Thank you; but what would you suggest if the charter does pass?"

"That you stay out here and build the road. Jones can do all the business in New York and you can manage this end. It is a big thing; I think large enough to warrant your giving your time to it, and Natalie and I will try to make your stay here pleasant."

"Thank you, my boy. I'll think very seriously about it."

They joined the rest of the party and walked slowly home over the velvety carpet of young grass, and as they walked, from the stable a group of jockeys and stable boys watched them.

"I tell you dat's a mighty purty gal dat Capin fotch home f'om New Yawk," said one.

"Ya-a-s, indeedy! But I like Miss Heloise de best. She look like she got de debble in her. Got an eye like a two year ol' filly dat ain't been broke."

"Talkin' about purty people, I think dat Mr. Manly's one of the cleanest looking pony-built men I ever saw. Now, Zeke, jis' look at him walkin along over dar. See how he picks up his feet. He'd make a flyer ef dey'd train him right."

"Sho—" said Zeke. "G'long, nigger, you ain't

got no eyes. Mr. Manly's powerful fine-lookin' man, but 'long side of the Cap'n! Why, jis' look at him as he walk along, he's a reg'lar BLUE-GRASS THOROUGHbred!"

THE END.

"DRESS."

The most instructive magazine in the world for women.
It teaches how to dress healthfully, correctly, and artistically.
It teaches how to dress according to individual needs.
It teaches the awkward how to be graceful in carriage and manner.
It shows the ugly how to be beautiful.
It instructs the unattractive in the art of being pleasing.
It teaches women to develop and enjoy their own possibilities of grace and beauty.
It improves women physically and mentally.
It contains knowledge not found in any other periodical, and which is priceless to its readers.
Subscription Price, \$2.00 per year, issued every sixty days.

THE
JENNESS-MILLER PUBLISHING CO.,
West 125th St., New York.

A GENEROUS OFFER.

THE first volume of the magazine "Dress," containing 13 numbers, sent to any address, postage paid, for 80c. These 13 books contain a very comprehensive idea of what constitutes correct dress, physical development, and everything that goes to make a healthy, graceful, and beautiful woman. Every mother who has her own and daughters' health at heart should subscribe for the magazine and the back numbers as well.

THE JENNESS-MILLER PUBLISHING CO.,
WEST 125TH ST., NEW YORK.

BOOKS MOST READ.

HIS WAY AND HER WILL.

A pen-and-ink miniature of Eastern society. By A. X. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents.

"A remarkably clever book."—*The American Bookseller*.

"One of the brightest of this season's novels."—*East End Bulletin*.

"Better than the average."—*N. Y. Sun*.

"It is worth reading."—*Baltimore Argus*.

KISSES OF FATE.

By E. HERON-ALLEN. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents.

Three hundred pages of as delightful reading as we have ever published. Julian Hawthorne compliments Mr. Allen as being the ablest of the many young writers competing for American readers' favor.

A SLAVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

By E. DE LANCEY PIERSON. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents.

"Is a new and high-wrought society novel that will be in good demand for summer reading."—*Boston Commonwealth*.

"The book is as novel in conception and plot as it is clever in execution; and will be a valuable adjunct to a spare afternoon at the beach."—*Daily Spray, Ashbury Park*.

"A clever story."—*Buffalo Express*.

THE LONE GRAVE OF THE SHENANDOAH.

By DONN PIATT. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, 50 cents.

Donn Piatt never wrote an uninteresting line in his long life. This book contains his best stories; each one shows the character of the author—that of a true, loving, and lovable man. Any man with such a vast and varied experience as that of Col. Piatt could have written wonderfully interesting stories, but it takes genius and born ability to write tales as delightful as these.

A DREAM AND A FORGETTING.

By JULIAN HAWTHORNE. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents.

"'A Dream and a Forgetting' will put the author on a higher plane than he has yet attained."—*San Francisco Chronicle*.

"Mr. Hawthorne is to be congratulated on having taken a decided step forward in his chosen profession."—*Chicago Herald*.

TOM BURTON.

A Story of the days of '61. By N. J. W. LE CATO, author of "Aunt Sally's Boy Jack." 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents.

"Told in a pleasing way."—*American, Baltimore*.

"The book is full of stirring incidents, and the occasional bits of natural humor add charms to an interesting and lively story."—*Jeweller's Weekly, N. Y.*

"It will surely interest both young and old."—*Times, Boston*.

A NOVEL WITH A PLOT:

THE TRUTH ABOUT TRISTREM VARICK.

By EDGAR SALTUS, author of "Mr. Incoul's Misadventure," etc. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, 50 cents.

In this novel Mr. Saltus has treated a subject hitherto unexploited in fiction. The scene is Fifth Avenue, the action emotional, the plot a surprise. "There is," some one said, "as much mud in the upper classes as in the lower; only, in the former it is gilded." This aphorism might serve as epigraph to Tristrem Varick.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers,

CHICAGO, NEW YORK, AND SAN FRANCISCO.

BOOKS MOST TALKED ABOUT.

EDEN.

By EDGAR SALTUS, author of "The Truth about Tristrem Varick," etc.
Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, 50 cents.

In this novel Mr. Saltus describes an episode in a honeymoon. The plot is dramatic, the action nervous, and the scene Fifth Avenue. As a picture of contemporaneous life it will be condemned by every lover of the commonplace.

A NEW "ROMANCE OF THE 19th CENTURY,"

EROS.

A Novel. By LAURA DAINTRY, author of "Miss Varian, of New York."
12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, 50 cents. Strong, interesting, and delightful.

MARIE.

A Seaside Episode. By J. P. RITTER, Jr. With Illustrations by Coultaus.
Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents.

In this poem, the author tells an interesting love story in an exceedingly bright, clever, and amusing fashion, that reminds one a good deal of Byron's "Beppo." Incidentally, he satirizes society in a light vein of humor, and in a style that is graceful and epigrammatic. The volume contains over forty illustrations, and is an admirable specimen of the bookmaker's art.

A NEW AND EXTRAORDINARY STUDY OF HUMAN NATURE.

THE ROMANCE OF A QUIET WATERING PLACE.

Being the unpremeditated Confessions of a not altogether frivolous girl (extracted from the private correspondence of Miss Evelyn J. Dwyer). By NORA HELEN WARDDEL. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents. Thirty beautiful Illustrations by Graves.

"The story is very readable."—*N. Y. Sun.*

"Cleverly conceived and as cleverly told, and has a dash of French flavor in it."—*Hartford Courant.*

"No American novel has been so beautifully illustrated. . . . An original work, bracing and piquant as Worcestershire sauce or a bottle of thirty years old sherry."—*The Argus, Baltimore.*

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers,

CHICAGO, NEW YORK, and SAN FRANCISCO.

NEW BOOKS.

MEMORIES OF THE MEN WHO SAVED THE UNION,

Lincoln, Stanton, Chase, Seward, Gen. Thomas, etc., with new portraits.

By DONN PIATT. 12mo., Cloth, gilt top, illustrated, \$1.50. Paper covers, 25 cents.

"This is one of the ablest books on the war, and will create a sensation."—*Times*.

"Very few men had the opportunity of knowing the inside history of the war as well as Mr. Piatt."—*Courier, New Haven*.

"Every word of the volume is thoroughly readable, and no one who begins it will lay it aside without going to the end."—*The American, Baltimore*.

ANTI-POVERTY AND PROGRESS.

By SISTER FRANCES M. CLARE, the Nun of Kenmare. 1 vol., 12mo. Paper covers, 50 cents.

"The good sister alternately deals effective blows against Mr. George's impracticabilities and urges upon the rich, alike ecclesiastical as lay, the inauguration of true anti-poverty from the top of society. * * * The author evidently thinks religion more of a remedy for poverty than science."—*Brooklyn Eagle*.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ALCOHOL.

By ROBERT ALEXANDER GUNN, M.D. Square 32mo. Cloth, 40 cents.

"There is much common sense in 'The Truth About Alcohol.' The author is a well-known New York physician, who has made a specialty of the subject of stimulants. He demonstrates by conclusive evidence that spirits are of great value in many cases, and that the temperance advocates wilfully pervert the truth. Increasing age brings with it less capacity for enduring mental strain and worry, and spirits act as a recuperative influence. The same is true in regard to taking of wine or liquors by brain-workers with their meals. Digestion is aided, and the lassitude so frequently experienced is removed. The little book demands a wide circulation, as it contains information vouched for by the best medical authorities, both here and abroad, which is of great practical value."—*San Francisco Chronicle*.

ROBERT ELSMERE.

By MRS. HUMPHREY WARD, author of "Miss Bretherton," etc. 12mo. Cloth. Price, \$1.25.

"The book is a drama in which every page is palpitating with intense and real life. It is a realistic novel in the highest sense of the word."—*Whitehall Review*.

"Comparable in sheer intellectual power to the best works of George Eliot. . . . Unquestionably one of the most notable works of fiction that has been produced in years."—*The Scotsman*.

THE PRINCESS DAPHNE.

12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. In Paper covers, illustrated by a remarkable and unique drawing by E. Hamilton Bell, 50 cents.

The heroine of this thrilling story is a Creole descended from two of the original settlers of New Orleans. The story deals with phases of Bohemian life in New York and London; with love, mesmerism, death, transmigration, and reincarnation. It is told in an undisguised realistic fashion that reminds one of Daudet's "Sapho," and it has a most startling dénouement.

For sale everywhere, or may be had of the Publishers on receipt of price, free of postage,

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO.,

CHICAGO, NEW YORK, and SAN FRANCISCO.

NEW BOOKS.

IT IS THE LAW.

A Story of Marriage and Divorce. By THOMAS EDGAR WILLSON. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents.

"The book is written with much force and the subject is presented in a fearless way."—*Democrat, Keokuk.*

"One of the most curious books that has appeared for many a day."—*Chronicle, San Francisco.*

"The book is not suited to general reading."—*Republican Journal, Belfast.*

"The book can only be appreciated by being read, and while somewhat flashy, is not a very exaggerated exposé of the matrimonial law as now observed."—*Columbia Law Times.*

"The book professes to show and prove that in New York a man can have as many wives as he chooses to support," &c.—*Woman's Journal, Boston.*

WOMAN THE STRONGER.

A Novel. By WM. J. FLAGG. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50 cents.

"Full of clever writing; up to the average novel."—*The Globe.*

The editor of *Belford's* says: "It is far superior to many of the so-called novels of the day."

MISS VARIAN OF NEW YORK.

By LAURA DAINTRY, author of "Eros." 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper 50 cents.

This is the Fifteenth Edition of "Miss Varian," a fact which speaks more forcibly than words for its worth and interest to the novel-reading world.

By the Author of "POEMS OF PASSION."

"MAURINE," and other Poems.

By ELLA WHEELER WILCOX. With Photogravure Portrait of the Author. 12 no. Cloth. Price \$1.00.

"Poems of Passion" sells faster than any other book of poems published. "Maurine" is by the same hand and brain. The poems are as good and beautiful as those in her other popular work.

STAR DUST.

A Collection of Poems. By FANNIE ISABEL SHERRICK. 12mo. Cloth, gilt \$1.00.

"These Poems show great originality and an imagery which is both forcible and delicate."—*St. Louis Republican.*

"A gifted writer, and many of her metrically expressed thoughts will have an enduring place in American Literature."—*Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

RENTS IN OUR ROBES.

By MRS. FRANK LESLIE. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50c.

A brilliant review of modern society and manners, by one of their most noted exponents. Sparkling sketches and essays of modern life, invested with all the charm of wit, raillery, sentiment, and spontaneity which a cultured woman of the world might be expected to bestow upon such a subject. "Rents in Our Robes" is a book that helps no less than it entertains; and perhaps no better idea of its charm can be conveyed, than in saying that the author has put a great deal of herself into the work.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers,

CHICAGO, NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO.

NEW BOOKS.

OFF THOUGHTS ABOUT LOVE, WOMEN, AND OTHER THINGS.

By SAMUEL ROCKWELL REED, of the Cincinnati *Commercial-Gazette*. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper, 50 cents.

The following are some of the subjects discussed in this valuable Book of Essays, by one of the best writers in the country: "Love and Marriage," "The Baby and the Ballot," "Scientific—Spots on Domestic Animals," "The Married Man's Liabilities," "The Women's Movement," "How and When to Die," "Was the Creation a Failure?" "Trial by Jury a Defeat of Justice," "Fishing and Morals," "The Converted Prize-Fighter."

THE CREED OF CHRISTENDOM.

Its Foundations Contrasted with its Superstructure. By WM. RATHBONE GREG, author of "Enigmas of Life," "Literary and Social Judgments," etc. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

SOCIALISM AND UTILITARIANISM.

By JOHN STUART MILL, author of "Principles of Political Economy," "A System of Logic," etc., etc. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

FORTY YEARS ON THE RAIL.

Reminiscences of a Veteran Conductor. By CHARLES B. GEORGE. Illustrated. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.00. Paper covers, 50c.

"No railroad man in the West has had more active or eventful experiences in train life."—*Chicago Evening Journal*.

"A very interesting book."—*Wisconsin*.

"He tells it all in a very chatty, agreeable style."—*Official Railway Guide*.

POLITICAL ORATORY OF EMERY A. STORRS, From Lincoln to Garfield. By ISAAC E. ADAMS. 12mo. Cloth, gilt top, \$1.25.

These orations cover twenty of the most eventful years of the nation's life, and are not only valuable for their matchless eloquence, but as a rich contribution to American history. They show the speaker to have had a masterly grasp of every subject he undertook to discuss. Every oration is rich in pointed illustration, full of important declaration of political principles, and sparkling throughout with genuine wit. It will be found to be an invaluable aid to those who are called upon to deliver political addresses. Indeed, no one can be thoroughly posted on the stirring political events of the last twenty years without reading Mr. Storrs's orations.

POEMS OF PASSION.

By ELLA WHEELER, author of "Maurine" and other poems. (27th edition.) The most salable Book of Poems published this century. Small 12mo. Red Cloth, \$1.00.

No book during the last ten years has created so genuine a sensation as "Poems of Passion." It required no common courage to write so boldly and so plainly of the great passion of love. Apart from these distinctive poems, the volume is rich in exquisite strains that will insure Ella Wheeler a permanent place among American poets.

THE CONFESSIONS OF A SOCIETY MAN.

By BLANCHE CONSCIENCE. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25. Illustrated.

"The Confessions of a Society Man" can hardly be called a book for young girls, though the publishers' prospectus declares it to be free of one immoral word. Also it is difficult to determine whether it is the work of a man or of a woman. Rumor has it that the author is a young lawyer, very prominent in the society of Philadelphia; at least, the scene is laid there at first, and later on vibrates between the Quaker City, New York, and the fashionable summer resorts. Whoever the author is he abandons generalizations and confines himself strictly to facts. He goes into details with a calm composure which simply takes away one's breath. . . . Born to good social position, wealthy, educated partially in Europe, good-looking, well-dressed, well-mannered, and utterly given over to frivolities, he is the familiar type of the reckless man of society."—*New York World*.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers,
CHICAGO, NEW YORK, AND SAN FRANCISCO.

NEW BOOKS.

THE POLITICS OF LABOR.

By PHILLIPS THOMPSON. 1 vol., 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

"This book will mark an epoch in American thought. It is fully up with the times.

* * * It is the prophet of the New Era."—*The People, R. I.*

"One of the most valuable works drawn out by current discussions on social and economical questions, and one that is sure to take a high place in the permanent and standard literature of the times.—*Opinion, Rockland.*

"This book is enlightening and inspiring; every thoughtful man and woman should read it."—*Tribune, Junction City.*

"Mr. Thompson presents the whole question of land and labor reform as clearly as could be desired."—*Mail, Chicago.*

BANCROFT'S HISTORY OF THE COLONIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES.

By GEORGE BANCROFT. Two vols in one. 12mo. Illustrated. Cloth, \$1.50.

"Since Ranke's death George Bancroft is the greatest living historian. The American citizen who has not read his history of the United States is a poor patriot, or an unfortunately ignorant person. We fear there are too many of them, as there are of those who have never even read the constitution of their country. It is not too late for these delinquents to buy a copy of this great book, and learn something that will be of interest and profit the remainder of their lives."—*The Churchman.*

THE STORY OF MANON LESCAUT.

From the French of L'Abbe Prévost. A new translation, by ARTHUR W. GUNDRY, from the French edition of 1753, with over 200 full-page and other illustrations by the great French artist, Maurice Leloir, and others. Reproduced by photogravure, wood-engraving, and photo-engraving processes from the superb edition de luxe, published in Paris in 1885. 4to. Cloth, extra gold and red, in a neat box, \$3.00. [N. B.—The price of the French edition, with same engravings, is \$20.]

PAINTERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE.

By EDITH HEALY. Illustrated by 25 original copperplate engravings of choice masterpieces of the leading Italian painters, executed in the highest style of art by the famous French engraver, M. De Mare. Small 4to. Richly bound, extra cloth, gold title and ornamentation, \$5.00. Full morocco, \$4.00. Cloth, school edition, \$1.25.

WASHINGTON IRVING'S

LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON.

3 vols., 12mo., cloth, \$4.50; 3 vols., 12mo., half morocco, \$9.00; 3 vols., 12mo., half calf, \$9.00.

To speak at this late day in praise of Irving's "Life of Washington" would be like painting marble or gilding refined gold. No American library, public or private, is complete without this work. This is a new edition, printed from new plates, at a very moderate price.

LES MISERABLES.

By VICTOR HUGO. 1 vol., large 12mo., \$1 50; the same on heavy paper in 3 vols., 12mo., cloth, \$4.50; 3 vols., 12mo., half morocco, \$9.00; 3 vols., 12mo., half calf, \$9.00. Illustrated

"Les Misérables" is universally admitted to be the great masterpiece of Victor Hugo, that brightest literary light of modern France. This book, once carefully read will never be forgotten. The study of it is an education.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers,

CHICAGO, NEW YORK, AND SAN FRANCISCO.

JUVENILES.

ONE SYLLABLE HISTORIES OF THE STATES.

Histories of the States in Words of One Syllable.

SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE YOUNG.

A HISTORY OF NEW ENGLAND

In Words of One Syllable. By Mrs. H. N. CADY. Richly Illustrated. Illuminated Board Cover. Boards, \$1.00. Cloth, \$1.50.

A HISTORY OF NEW YORK

In Words of One Syllable. By Mrs. J. H. WALWORTH. Richly Illustrated. Illuminated Board Cover. Boards, \$1.00. Cloth, \$1.50.

A HISTORY OF ILLINOIS

In Words of One Syllable. By THOS. W. HANDFORD. Richly Illustrated. Illuminated Board Cover. Boards, \$1.00. Cloth, \$1.50.

A HISTORY OF OHIO

In Words of One Syllable. By Mrs. H. N. CADY. Richly Illustrated. Illuminated Board Cover. Boards, \$1.00. Cloth, \$1.50.

WHAT JESUS SAID.

The Words of the Lord Jesus, Expounded, Classified, and Arranged in Convenient Positions Suitable for Committal to Memory. A Book Specially for the Little Ones. By THOMAS W. HANDFORD. With 20 Illustrations from Drawings by Gustave Doré. Illuminated Board Cover, 50 cents.

POETRY AND PICTURES.

Poems and Legends from the Old World and the New. For the Boys and Girls of America. Edited by THOMAS W. HANDFORD. Beautifully Illustrated. Illuminated Board Cover. Price, 50 cents.

ANIMALS AND BIRDS.


Stories and Studies Concerning the Habits of Animals and Birds. Profusely Illustrated. Edited by THOMAS W. HANDFORD. Illuminated Board Cover. Price, 50 cents.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

Stories, Legends, and Poems of the Merry Christmas Tide. Christmas Games and Readings suitable for Christmas Festivities. Book for the Young. By THOMAS W. HANDFORD. Fully Illustrated. Illuminated Board Cover. Price, 50 cents.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO.,

CHICAGO, NEW YORK, and SAN FRANCISCO.



BELFORD'S MAGAZINE

DONN PIATT, EDITOR.

A COMPLETE COPYRIGHT NOVEL IN EACH NUMBER.

More than two thousand newspapers have reviewed and commented favorably on the Magazine among them the following:

"Altogether the MAGAZINE is full both of interest and promise."—*Chicago Herald*.

"If the MAGAZINE contained nothing besides the 100 pages of Elizabeth W. Bellamy's novel, 'Old Man Gilbert,' it would be worth more than its price. The story is of Florida life, and, in action, interest, humor, dialect, and portrayal of negro and Southern types, it deserves the highest rank among literary productions of the New South."—*Chicago Tribune*.

"Altogether the monthly seems likely to win very wide reading, and to deserve it quite as much as some more pretentious elder sisters."—*Chicago Times*.

"It is really a first-class publication both in matter and appearance."—*Chicago Journal*.

"BELFORD'S MAGAZINE offers in its first number * * * a long story or novellette by a Southern writer, Mrs. Bellamy. This story is really above the average of magazine fiction, and it is far from needing the flattering letter with which the author of St. Elmo introduces it."—*N. Y. Tribune*.

"BELFORD'S MAGAZINE has been wise enough to select the keenest and most slashing writer at its command, Col. Donn Piatt, to edit it and to contribute to its pages. * * * Such Republican contributors as Coates Kinney, one of whose stirring lyrics is worth the price of an entire volume."—*Springfield Register*.

"American magazine literature has been substantially enriched by the opening number of Belford's new magazine."—*N. Y. Standard*.

"The articles on tariff reform and wool are worth the close attention of every thinking man in the land."—*Chattanooga News*.

"This magazine will certainly grow rapidly in public esteem."—*Richmond Times*.

"It is unique in containing more reading than advertising matter, a feature that some of its older contemporaries might emulate to their obvious advantage and improvement."—*Burlington Hawkeye*.

"It will attract attention by its strength and vigor, and independent treatment of the foremost political topics."—*Syracuse (N. Y.) Herald*.

"The number before us gives unmistakable evidence that this new aspirant for public honors is to be essentially and distinctively American, unfettered by prejudice, and one whose contents will be educative and intensely interesting, not only to those who cursorily glance over current monthlies, but to those who, reading from cover to cover, desire a magazine whose every article shall be thoroughly readable from a popular standpoint."—*The Progressive Teacher*.

BELFORD'S MONTHLY is a first-class medium for advertising, as the publishers guarantee a *bona-fide* circulation of at least 70,000 copies per month.

Price, \$2.50 a year, or 25 cents per number.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers,

Chicago, New York, and San Francisco.

BELFORD'S MAGAZINE.

DONN PIATT, EDITOR.

Washington, D. C. July 16, 1888.

We have examined BELFORDS MAGAZINE; find that in its political tone and contents it is distinctly and thoroughly democratic; of high literary merit, and we take pleasure in commending it to all who want a fair, able and fearless exponent of sound principles, combined with the literature of a first-class Magazine.

A. H. GARLAND, Attorney General.
JOHN M. BLACK, Com. of Pensions.
D. W. VOORHEES, U. S. S.
JAMES B. BECK, U. S. S.
JOS. C. S. BLACKBURN, U. S. S.
J. R. McPHERSON, U. S. S.
JOHN W. DANIEL, U. S. S.
JOHN H. REAGAN, U. S. S.
Z. B. VANCE, U. S. S.
M. C. BUTLER, U. S. S.
JAS. Z. GEORGE, U. S. S.
WADE HAMPTON, U. S. S.
C. R. BRECKINRIDGE, M. C.
W. C. WHITTHORNE, M. C.
THOMAS WILSON, M. C.
JOS. WHEELER, M. C.
MELBOURNE H. FORD, M. C.
GEORGE A. ANDERSON, M. C.
THOMAS R. HUDD, M. C.
BENTON McMILLIN, M. C.
JAMES PHELAN, M. C.
JOHN H. ROGERS, M. C.
T. M. NORWOOD, M. C.
JAMES N. BURNS, M. C.
HENRY GEORGE.

DON M. DICKINSON, P. M. Genl.
A. E. STEVENSON, 1st Asst. P. M. G.
ELI SAULSBURY, U. S. S.
E. C. WALTHALL, U. S. S.
W. G. SUMNER, Professor, Yale Col.
JAMES K. JONES, U. S. S.
R. Q. MILLS, M. C.
JAMES H. BERRY, U. S. S.
JAMES L. PUGH, U. S. S.
H. B. PAYNE, U. S. S.
C. C. MATSON, M. C.
R. W. TOWNSHEND, M. C.
J. H. OUTHWAITE, M. C.
H. H. CARLTON, M. C.
J. C. CLEMENS, M. C.
B. F. SHIVELY, M. C.
WM. C. OATES, M. C.
W. J. STONE, M. C.
P. T. GLASS, M. C.
C. T. O'FERRALL, M. C.
F. T. SHAW, M. C.
J. R. WHITING, M. C.
S. Z. LANDES, M. C.
ALEX. M. DOCKERY, M. C.
T. C. McRAE, M. C.
JOHN E. HUTTON, M. C.
H. W. RUSK, M. C.
THOMAS E. POWELL

BELFORD'S MONTHLY is a first-class medium for advertising, as the publishers guarantee a *bona-fide* circulation of at least 70,000 copies per month.

Prices. \$2.50 a year, or 25 cents per number.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers.
CHICAGO. NEW YORK. SAN FRANCISCO



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date:

OCT

1996



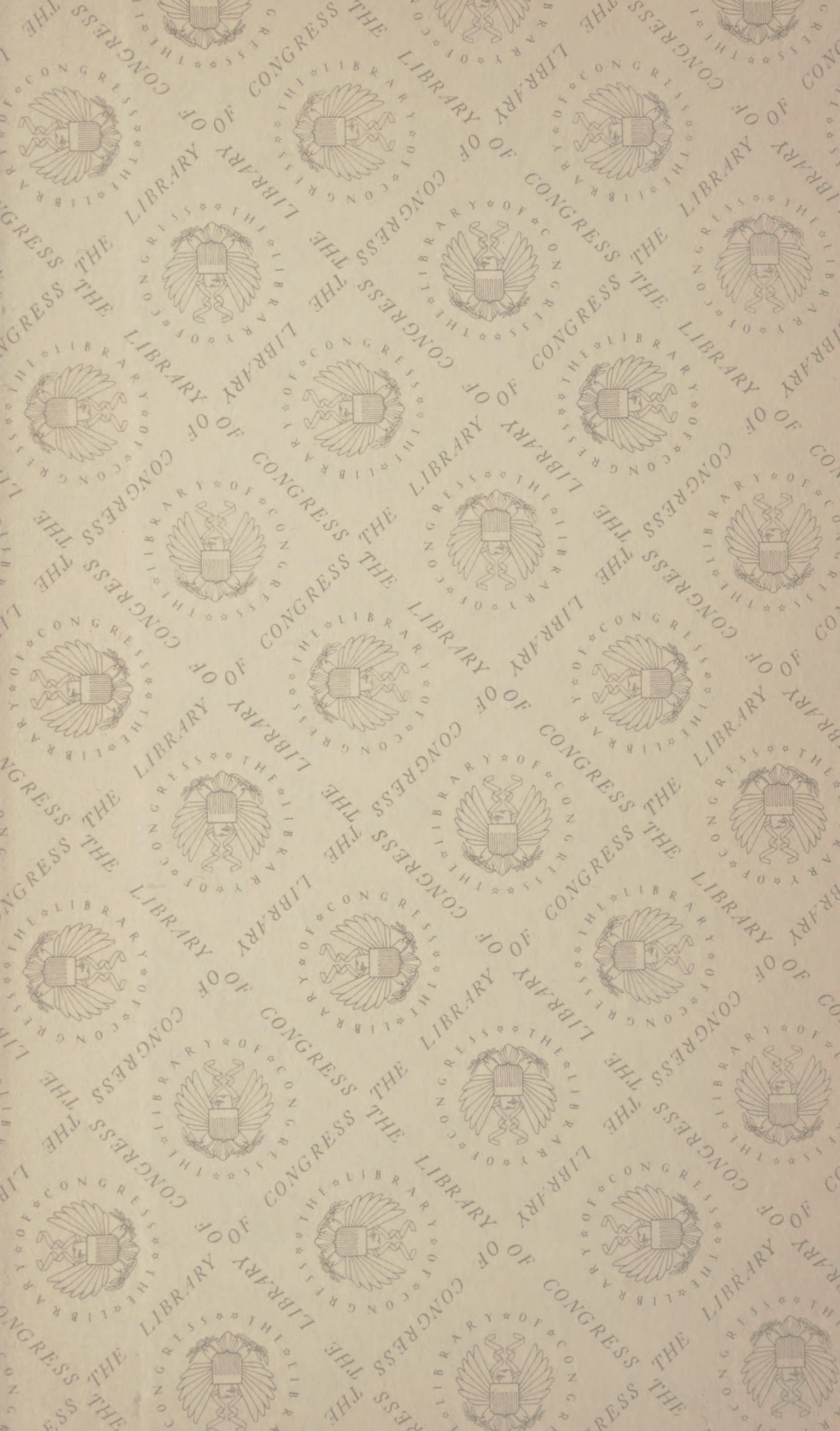
BOOKKEEPER

PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

111 Thomson Park Drive

Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

(412) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00021972502